



SOMALI WOMEN'S CONVENTION REPORT

Dedication to **ABDIRAHMAN HOSH JIBRIL**, *Federal Minister of Constitutional Affairs*

A foreword by **Deqa Yasin Hagi Yusuf**,
Federal Minister of Women and Human Rights Development



Somalia mourns the loss of a great statesman and champion of women's rights:
ABDIRAHMAN HOSH JIBRIL, our Federal Minister of Constitutional Affairs.

Born and schooled in Somalia, Honorable Hosh subsequently earned degrees in Sociology and Law in Canada. Committed to the future of Somalia and the welfare of those most excluded, he went on to use his expertise and tremendous intellect to serve as a lawyer with a focus on refugees, immigration and human rights; a community activist; a member of parliament; and a two-term Minister of Constitutional Affairs. He did so with integrity, humility, an open mind and an unwavering ability to see the best in each and everyone. A true man of the people, he focused on what unites us beyond our different backgrounds or status in society.

As a country, we will remember his true commitment and important contributions to the full participation of all Somalis, including women and girls, in building a united, inclusive and peaceful Somalia. On a personal level, I will miss a dear friend who knew how to tackle great challenges with a contagious sense of humour. My thoughts are with his family, his sons and his daughter Sagal, who were his greatest pride and joy.

The organizers of the Somali Women's Convention could count on the valuable support of Minister Hosh. The Convention and the Somali Women's Charter embodied many principles that Minister Hosh firmly stood behind: Unity, inclusive participation and human rights for all. It is now time to work together to translate these principles and the demands of the Charter into action. In this endeavour, we will miss the treasured advice and contributions of Minister Hosh. His example will continue to serve as a guide and inspiration for all of us as we work towards a better future for Somalia.

This publication is dedicated to the Minister and his lasting legacy.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Current efforts to review Somalia's constitution and develop electoral laws provide critical windows of opportunity to advance gender equality and women's rights. To help ensure these openings are seized, 350 women and gender champions from across Somalia and the diaspora convened in Mogadishu on 04-06 March 2019 for the three-day Somali Women's Convention.

The Convention aimed to raise awareness of the review of the constitution, electoral laws, as well as other openings for women's rights; to build new alliances for advocacy on gender equality and women's empowerment; and to provide women with an opportunity to develop joint demands for their rights in the constitution, the electoral laws and beyond.

The agenda for the Convention was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development with an inclusive Steering Group composed of leaders who have made – and are making – critical contributions to the promotion of women's rights and their empowerment in government, parliament, civil society, the media and the private sector, both at the national level and in the Federal Member States.

Participants included women's leaders and gender champions working in government, civil society and the private sector at national level, in the Federal Member States and in diaspora. Special efforts were made to ensure representation of marginalized groups, such as internally

displaced women, women living with disabilities, women from rural areas and youth. Male gender champions and religious scholars also actively participated in the conference.

In panel discussions and working groups, delegates deliberated on key challenges faced by women and girls, the active contributions women are making to the transition, and solutions for gender equality, peace and prosperity in Somalia. The discussions were live-streamed and continued on social media, reaching an audience of 207150 outside of the conference halls. Shared demands for women's rights emerging from these discussions were compiled into a single document: the Somalia Women's Charter.

At the end of the Convention, the Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Hon. Deqa Yasin, presented the Charter to the Prime Minister of Somalia, Hon. Hassan Ali Khaire, in front of all delegates. Enclosed below, it affirms that Somali women are “equal partners working for peace and political processes, leading us towards security, stability and sustainable development for all” and calls “for the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia to enshrine the unconditional commitment to gender equality, human rights and empowerment of women”. It goes on to list women's joint demands for their rights in the constitution, electoral laws and beyond. In closing remarks to the Convention, Somalia's Prime Minister expressed his commitment to make the Somali Women's Charter a reality.



Deqa Yasin Hagi Yusuf, Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Federal Government of Somalia



SOMALI WOMEN'S CHARTER

Preamble:

We, the women of Somalia affirm that:

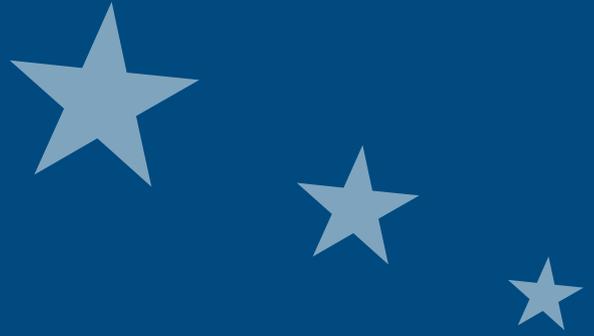
- The unity of Somali women is sacred. In this spirit, we represent diverse groups of women in the Federal Member States and the Benadir Region, including those living in rural and urban areas and diaspora, women living with disabilities, young women and girls and elder women;

- 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.

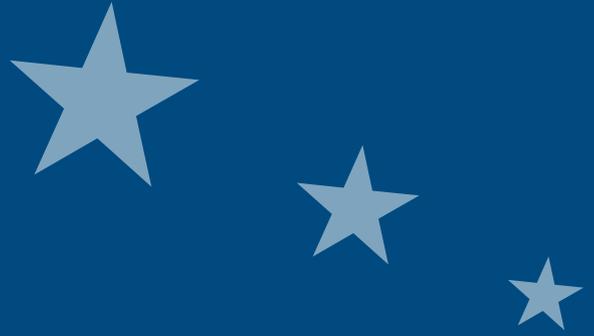
In order to address structural and historical discrimination, a quota is required to reflect a 50/50 gender divide: not less than 50% of any sex to be represented across the three branches of government, all independent commissions, across all federal member states and all levels of governance, whether 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.

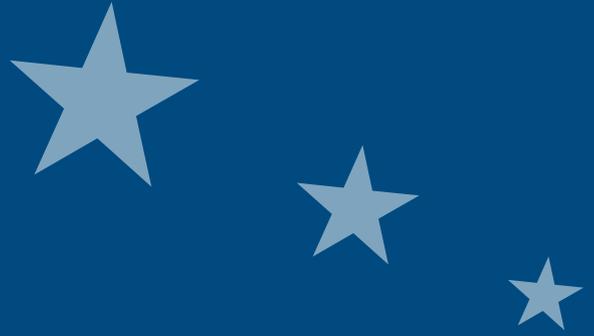
Justice for all

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 Sharia 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).

INTRODUCTION

In the National Development Plan (2017-2019), the Federal Government of Somalia recognizes that 'Peace, stability and development can only be efficiently achieved by addressing the obstacles women face to fully contribute to their country's development.' Agenda 2030, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2282, UNSCR 1325 and follow-up resolutions, and other international agreements affirm that advancing women's empowerment in conflict-affected settings is both a key objective in its own right and a precondition for sustainable peace and development.

The on-going review of Somalia's constitution and the development of new electoral laws offer key windows of opportunity to advance this agenda. Using these opportunities to promote women's rights could lead to a watershed for women's empowerment – today and for generations to come. Failure to do so will lead to a loss of hard-won achievements, including recent progress in women's political representation.

To help ensure these windows of opportunity are seized, 350 women and gender champions from across Somalia and the diaspora came together in Mogadishu on 04-06 March 2019 for the Somali Women's Convention.

The Convention aimed to strengthen awareness of the review of the constitution and electoral laws, as well as other openings to advance women's rights and their empowerment; to create new partnerships for advocacy in this area; and to offer a forum for women to develop shared demands for their rights in the constitution, the electoral laws and beyond.

The Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development led the development of the conference agenda with an inclusive Steering Group comprising leaders in the promotion of women's empowerment in diverse fields, including representatives of government, parliament, civil society, the private sector and the media.

The Convention included panel discussions and working groups on women's constitutional rights; women's political participation; women's economic participation; women, climate change and resilience; justice for women and girls; gender-based violence and women's roles in innovation. The First Lady of Somalia and Somalia's Prime Minister opened and closed the event. Further widening participation, the event generated high levels of interest on social media.



FROM LEFT: **Sainab Abdi Moallim**, First Lady of Somalia; **Hassan Ali Khaire**, Prime Minister, Federal Government of Somalia; **Deqa Yasin Haji Yusuf**, Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Federal Government of Somalia

Following three days of discussions, participants agreed on a set of joint demands for women's rights: the 'Somali Women's Charter' (see above). It calls for women's special representation in all levels of governance through a 50 % quota, zero tolerance for gender-based violence and passage of pending Sexual Offences legislation, the promotion and protection of women's socio-economic rights, and other steps to promote women's rights and empowerment.

At the end of the Convention, Somalia's Prime Minister expressed his commitment to realize this Charter. He specifically called on the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development to draw up an action plan for the implementation of the Charter and its integration into the next government budget.

This report provides a summary of the discussions at the Somalia Women's Convention. It first highlights opening remarks provided by a number of women's leaders and gender champions, starting with the First Lady of Somalia, H.E. Sainab Abdi Moallim. The main section of the report summarizes panel and group discussions on the seven main themes of the convention. The report then turns to closing remarks offered by Somalia's Prime Minister, Hassan Ali Khaire, and others. Finally, this publication provides an overview of social media engagement on the Convention. The conference programme is included in Annex 1.



Group of Somali singers (Hobollada Waaberi) performing during the opening of the convention.



Conference participants share their concerns for women's rights during group discussion.

OPENING OF THE CONVENTION: Introductory Remarks

Sainab Abdi Moallim
First Lady of Somalia

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor for me to be here at this convention, where women from across Somalia and the diaspora have come together to talk about their concerns.

This past week was extremely painful for the Somali people. A 12-year old girl was mistreated in the most heinous way. May Allah have mercy on the soul of Aisha, who was killed and thrown in front of her family's house. We have to take a stand against perpetrators that commit these grave crimes and ensure that they face justice. It is our shared responsibility to renounce acts like these with a clear and loud voice.

Our country knows many Aishas and this kind of act sends a message of terror and fear to the hearts of our people. We have to counter this message, all of us, and let all of our girls know that we will no longer allow for this to happen to them. The horrible act committed against Aisha is committed against all of us. We have to stand up against this.

This convention, where Somali women are discussing their rights, challenges and concerns, is taking place at a very opportune time. Women in Somalia have long struggled to keep their families alive. Somali mothers have always done all that is necessary to take care of their children. Addressing the challenges faced by Somali women in our society is in the best interest of all families and our nation as a whole. Somali women are known for their power, patience and integrity. If they come together and use their minds, capacities and resources, they can and will bring about change. To reach peace and overcome Somalia's current challenges, women must be part of the process.

It is critical that women receive their full rights, including in the areas of education, justice, security and politics. We can better attain this if we respect each other and work together in pursuit of our common goal.

There are many girls in Somalia that have studied and worked their way up. However, they are still struggling to realize their rights and obtain fair chances in our society.

They lack access to justice, they suffer sexual violence and extreme poverty. Perpetrators also have mothers and they should be the first to stand up against the horrible crimes of their sons. This can prevent many other crimes.

It is also important to note the significant advances Somali women have made in business and politics. They have attained an unprecedented number of seats in parliament. This was possible after they came together and voiced their demands, following a clear strategy. More and more Somali women are educated and this, in the long term, will help us to solve our common challenges more effectively.



Sainab Abdi Moallim, First Lady of Somalia



Addressing the challenges faced by Somali women in our society is in the best interest of all families and our nation as a whole.

Deqa Yasin Hagi Yusuf

Minister of Women and Human Rights Development,
Federal Government of Somalia

It is a great honor to welcome you to this convention for Somali women initiated by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development. As you are aware, our government is committed to supporting those who are not well represented in public life and decision-making, including women.

We decided that this convention should bring together the women leaders who have advocated for women's rights and political representation since the Carta Conference. It should be noted that anything we have today is the result of the sacrifice made by these women. We thank these women, many of whom are with us here today.

The reason for convening this convention at this time is that there are opportunities for women's rights, such as the review of the constitution, which women must seize. The drafting of the election law and the political parties law is also in progress. We see these as important opportunities that, if effectively harnessed, can help us move forward from where we are today.

This Somalia women's convention will include three days of intensive work. Once these opening remarks and speeches end today, we will get to work. We have no time to rest, no time to waste.

What is important is that we produce a charter that is shared with all individuals and agencies concerned with reviewing the constitution and drafting electoral laws to ensure accountability to women's demands for equity and equality. The charter will also help us coordinate our efforts. On the third, closing day of this conference, we will present a copy of the charter to the Prime Minister.

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The reason for convening this convention at this time is that there are opportunities for women's rights, such as the review of the constitution, which women must seize.



Deqa Yasin Hagi Yusuf, Minister of Women and Human Rights Development,
Federal Government of Somalia

We also have the First Lady of Somalia here with us today. She is not just here as the First Lady but also as a woman who has interest in the development of women and their participation. Madam First Lady, your pledge to support our efforts means a lot to us. Thank you for this.

In the preparation for this convention, we have formed a 15-member women's committee whose members were selected from different sectors of the society. All of them have played significant roles in the fight for women's rights and political participation.

This committee worked with me tirelessly to ensure that this convention is representative of all Somali women. I thank members of that committee for their hard work and dedication.

During the two years that I have led this Ministry, we have managed to develop the Child Rights Bill as well as the Sexual Offenses Bill. The latter is currently with the parliament after being passed by cabinet. I am requesting the acting speaker of the parliament to make the Sexual Offenses Bill the first item to be passed once parliamentary sessions are reconvened.

Especially in view of the increasing incidents of rape taking place in the country, what is required is a strong law. It is the duty of parliament to revise and review all of the laws that are brought to them. We strongly remind you to pass this bill as soon as possible.

We are also about to complete the drafting of the law against FGM. In addition we have started developing a disability act. With the understanding that people living with disabilities are full citizens whose rights must be

Gamal Mohamed Hassan

Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development

equally protected, this government is determined to complete the formation of the disability agency. The bill for its establishment was the first bill signed by the president last year. All of these legal instruments are intended to lay the foundation for the wellbeing and protection of women and people living with disability.

Today, we are determined that women's rights should not regress. Their level of representation in parliament, currently 24%, should not decrease. The President and the Prime Minister are highly dedicated to support us in women's development. I would also like to thank men who are members of the cabinet who always support me in our work.

This convention brings together women from all sectors of the society, such as the business community, journalists, security personnel, both from within the country and from the diaspora. Also in attendance are ministers from the federal member states.

Our aim for this convention is the adoption of a women's charter that will outline the needs of women and their demands, such as the inclusion of unambiguous provisions defining women's rights and representation in the constitution. In this undertaking we build on a long history of women working for the rights of all Somali women and girls. Many of these leaders have since passed away and cannot be with us here today. I would like to thank these women for their service and the inspiration they give us today. They are always with us in spirit.

I would like to comment on the role that Minister Deqa Yasin has played in her role as the Minister of Women and Human Rights Development. When this government was constituted, we developed a National Development Plan. But that plan lacked a pillar related to the development of women's issues. When Minister Deqa Yasin found out about this, she asked for the inclusion of this pillar in the National Development Plan. Since that pillar was adopted, the development of Somali women is part and parcel of every development project in this country.

Women ministers in our cabinet play a more significant role than their male counterparts. I would also like to commend the role of the many other women who have fought for women's rights in Somalia. I do not think that opponents would have easily given up their positions if women had not fought.

I would also like to urge parliament to pass the Sexual Offences Bill as soon as possible. For a woman to be raped and tortured and killed and the perpetrators not brought to justice underlines the dire situation of the country. I commend the efforts that the Federal Member State of Puntland has made so far but I emphasize that there is a long way to go. There are many women who are being discriminated against, raped, ill-treated in all parts of the country and whose stories are never heard.

Somalia just became a member of the United Nation's Human Rights Council for the first time. I congratulate Minister Deqa for this achievement. We are with you and always on your side.



Gamal Mohamed Hassan, Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development

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I would like to urge parliament to pass the Sexual Offences Bill as soon as possible.

Khadija Mohamed Diriye

Minister of Youth and Sports, Federal Government of Somalia

This day is very important to me as a woman. That is why I cancelled an official business trip to ensure I could attend this opening ceremony and this conference.

This convention is taking place at the right time. The development of women and youth are priorities of the government led by President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo and Premier Hassan Ali Khaire. The government of Premier Khaire is the first government in both pre and post-conflict Somalia that has put women in charge of six full ministries, although women's demands for their rightful quota have always been on the table. This would not have been possible without the commitment of President Farmaajo and Premier Khaire.

The combination of human rights and women's affairs in the portfolio of Minister Deqa is an indication of this government's view that the promotion of women's rights are at the center of human rights. Although I am a Minister, too, as a woman, Minister Deqa Yasin is our leader and our minister.

We are asking members of the two houses of parliament to pass laws relevant to women's rights as speedily as possible. We urge them to cooperate on this matter. As members of society constituting over half of the population, we deserve that you listen to our calls and demands seriously. And as women, we should knock all doors in in order to lobby for these laws.

In particular it is time that the houses of parliament go forward and pass the Sexual Offences Bill before them. We can no longer tolerate the constant tragedy affecting women while we look on. We urge religious scholars to support these laws. We want their religious wisdom and messages. As delegates to this convention, I urge you to include statements calling for the passing of these laws on women's rights in the Women's Charter you will be developing. I also call for the two houses of the parliament to strengthen their cooperation to ensure these goals can be achieved.

As women, we should also support the security of the region by collaborating with security agencies. We should not accept that we get locked up indoors out of fear and intimidation. That would mean giving up. I urge the regional administration and the security agencies to involve women in the stabilization process, particularly for Mogadishu.

I would like to congratulate Somali women for their courage and achievements, wherever they are, in advance of international women's day.

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As members of society constituting over half of the population, we deserve that you listen to our calls and demands seriously.



Khadija Mohamed Diriye, Minister of Youth and Sports, Federal Government of Somalia

Mahad Abdalla Awad

Deputy Speaker of the House of the People

Today is not yet women's day. It will take place this coming Friday, 8th March. However, I would suggest that this week is legally established as the week of Somali Women.

The fight for women's rights has been a long a journey. Many women have taken part in it. In 2012, during Garowe I and Garowe II conference delegates first agreed on a 20 % quota for women and then increased it to 30 %. This is how the women's quota began.

However, when the traditional leaders met, they vowed to fight the women's quota. Instead of 30%, they allowed only 14% for woman. Some of the clans refused completely to include women in their share.

Later on, the current Minister for Women and Human Rights Development, Minister Deqa, was appointed as the Deputy chairperson of the FEIT (Federal Electoral Indirect Team committee and she fought for the women's quota in the 2016 Election. At one point, she was even attacked at her hotel and sustained minor injuries. She did not give up, but still continued to fight for the women's quota, even while in hospital.

As the lists compiled by member states, clans and other groups were repeatedly rejected, the quota of women was finally increased to 24%. Considering where we started, this is quite a substantial proportion. In 2004, the Transitional Federal Charter for the Somali Republic provided that the women's quota in the Transitional Federal Parliament should be 12%. However, in practice, that ratio decreased to 7%. That is what we started from.

In terms of women's representation in federal parliament, Somalia is in a good position at the moment. We should acknowledge those women who have fought for women's political participation. Their names and sacrifices should be recorded and taught to future generations.

Now it is time to also look at other areas. How many women are in the civil service? What about the armed forces? The Provisional Constitution of 2012 says that women should be given consideration in the recruitment of military personnel. It is the first time that a female general becomes the deputy commissioner of the armed forces. Women are honest. It is not likely that they would take bribes from Al-Shabaab and others.

I would encourage that business women should also be given their due consideration. They should be gathered and encouraged to contribute to the reconstruction of the country. Women professionals such as doctors and lawyers should also have their own associations and such associations should be supported. Women's important roles in all of these areas need support and attention.



Mahad Abdalla Awad, Deputy Speaker of the House of the People

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We should acknowledge those women who have fought for women's political participation. Their names and sacrifices should be recorded and taught to future generations.

The late Eng. Abdirahman Omar Osman Yarisow Mayor of Mogadishu

Somalia mourns the loss of Eng. Abdirahman Omar Osman Yarisow, Mayor of Mogadishu, a leader in Somalia's recovery and a champion for women's rights. May peace be upon him.

I would like to congratulate Minister Deqa Yasin for realizing that it is the right time to bring Somali women together to deliberate on issues that concern them. Including women living with disabilities as attendees of the convention is also a significant step and I commend the Minister for this.

Over the next three days, there is a very important agenda in front of you. You will discuss the role you can take in the advancement of women's rights, women's development and the development of the country in general. I urge you to take leadership on these agendas for women's empowerment and take advantage of the opportunities that are provided to you.

I am confident that the outcomes you will achieve at this convention will be significant. I would like to assure you the support of Benadir Regional Administration with whatever possible while this convention is in progress.

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I urge you to take leadership on these agendas for women's empowerment and take advantage of the opportunities that are provided to you.



The late Eng. Abdirahman Omar Osman Yarisow, Mayor of Mogadishu

Caasha Khaliif Mohamed Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Hirshabelle State of Somalia

I would like to salute all of the women who have gathered here today and hope that you will produce a unanimous Somali Women's Charter that will help the next generation of our women and girls. Women are the backbone of this world. I hope that we will solve our shared problems as women first. And that we will seek our quota so that we can become visible in our society. I also hope that we become a role model for the Somali society. Women are the foundation of Somali society and all other nations. Somali women are those who saved the lives of the children when civil war broke out in our country. Women are those who fled the country to protect their children from the war. Women who went abroad also protected Somali communities by sending back remittances every month. Many women continued their education and obtained degrees while in diaspora, building their capacities to help promote peace and prosperity in Somalia upon their return.

Given the important contributions that women can and do make to the country's development, we need the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States to give women their appropriate role in peacebuilding and reconstruction in the whole country. We need a fair representation of women in the political sphere and all areas of decision-making. We need justice for victims of rape, including for Aisha Ilyas who was recently raped and murdered in Galkayo. We have to oppose the traditional justice system of the country that does not help women and rape victims anymore. We as Hirshabelle women fully support this convention, an opportunity for women to discuss their situation and produce a shared Charter, as our Minister Deqa Yasin told us. We have to unite our efforts to address the challenges women have been facing for the past three decades and secure our full quota for decision-making positions in the country.



Caasha Khaliif Mohamed, Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Hirshabelle State of Somalia

Hawa Yusuf Ahmed

Member of the House of the People, Chairperson Gender, Human Rights and Humanitarian Committee

It is an honor for me to attend this national consultative convention, which brings together women from all the different regions and from abroad. The aim of this convention is for women to discuss their shared concerns, short term and long-term goals.

It is imperative that our convention focuses on key issues of concern to women, such as the difficult situation they endure in the country, and how to secure their basic rights such as education, health, economy, political representation and participation in the public sphere.

We also have to fight issues that violate the rights of women such as rape, FGM, early marriage, sexual exploitation and all forms of gender discrimination. The increasing number of inhumane actions committed against Somali women are causing pain to all Somali women.

If women are not empowered, our society cannot succeed because mothers are the teachers of the family. If women are not empowered, society will regress and generations of lost children will join our society.

I urge the women here to be aware that you have no advocate to represent you. You are your only advocates. So I urge you to unite against common challenges that you face. We constitute at least 50% of the society. If we unite, support one another and stand together, we are going to succeed. So we must overcome minor issues that divide us. You should be aware that you are a separate clan, and not a member of any of the other clans. That means we should support women who are in office. Rarely is a woman in office replaced by another woman. It is always men. That is the result of our lack of unity.

I hope that this convention will result in tangible points for action. We should also select convention delegates who will take leadership in the implementation of the outcomes of this convention.

I assure you that we are going to pass the Sexual Offences Bill, which is currently at the house of the people of the parliament. The minister should be given the chance to read the bill in front of the parliament so that they can deliberate on it.

I also urge religious scholars to give this bill the priority it deserves. Violations occur everyday and this law is required throughout the country to curb these violations.

I am deeply sorry about the horrible rape cases that have been taking place recently, in particular the case of Aisha from Galkayo. I call for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

“

I urge you to unite against common challenges that you face. We constitute at least 50% of the society. If we unite, support one another and stand together, we are going to succeed.



Hawa Yusuf Ahmed, Member of the House of the People, Chairperson Gender, Human Rights and Humanitarian Committee

Peter de Clercq

UNSOM, Officer in Charge and DSRSG

I would like to thank Honorable Minister Deqa Yasin for organizing this very important event. We should not only welcome the Somali women but also the Somali men in attendance. I would like to urge my brothers here that, when we leave here, we leave with a charter in support of women's cause in a country where 100% of traditional leadership are men.

I would like to express my appreciation and admiration for women leaders who have shown dedication for the stabilization of this country, and who have pursued peace throughout the period of conflict.

Significant progress has been made in increasing the representation of women in the government and parliament. And the achievement of 24% for women in parliament is a great sign of progress.

But we have to go beyond the numbers. We should ask ourselves: are women being given the power and influence they need in decision-making?

The representation of women in the Federal Member States is much lower than that of the federal government. I urge the federal government and member states to collaborate in ensuring that women's representation at that level is significantly improved.

I would also like to talk about the women's parliamentary caucuses in both houses. They are extremely important. For example, women there can use their 24% proportion to influence laws that benefit women and young girls in this country and advance their agenda. And I hope that the women caucus will unite around these issues.

The recent horrible events in this country remind us that we have to come together and put in place a legal framework that makes it possible for the perpetrators to be prosecuted.

The deliberation over the next few days can bring us far closer to the development of a Women's Charter which will enable women in the government, women parliamentarians to move the concerns of women forward. So, I urge for a Women's Charter to be adopted at the end of this convention.

My hope is that women will find strong common points, strong common interests to move their concerns forward. To use their influence as 50% of the population.

I have worked in Somalia enough to know that Somali women do not need to be reminded what to do and how to do it. They know.

As the United Nations, I would like to point out that we are 100% supportive of Minister Deqa's initiatives.

Long live Somalia, Long Live Somali Women.

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I would like to express my appreciation and admiration for women leaders who have shown dedication for the stabilization of this country, and who have pursued peace throughout the period of conflict.



Peter de Clercq, UNSOM, Officer in Charge and DSRSG

THEMATIC SESSIONS

Introduction and Summary of Key Themes

The thematic sessions of the conference focused on several key areas that affect the lives of women and girls and their ability to actively contribute to sustainable peace and development in Somalia. These included women's constitutional rights; women's political participation; women's economic empowerment; women, climate change and resilience; justice for women and girls; innovation and women pioneers; and sexual and gender-based violence and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Each session was opened by a panel discussion between experts and leaders in the field, which were live-streamed and reported on social media to a total audience of 207149. The sessions served to provide an overview of key issues in the respective areas of interest. Following each opening panel, delegates further debated key issues in group discussions and deliberated on critical points and demands to be featured in the Women's Charter. To provide a basis for discussion, an initial draft for the Charter was developed by an inclusive Steering Group of women leaders who had made – and are making – critical contributions to the promotion of women's rights and empowerment in government, parliament, civil society, the media and the private sector, both at the national level and in the Federal Member States. During group discussion, facilitators solicited participants' feedback on this initial draft.

Following group discussion, participants reported back to plenary on key issues and demands to be featured in the Women's Charter. The draft Charter was continuously revised throughout the conference to reflect these inputs. At the end of the Convention, Hon. Deqa Yasin, Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, presented the final demands of the Charter in front of all the convention delegates and handed the document over to the Prime Minister.

Throughout the discussions, delegates agreed that women are the backbone of Somali society. During conflict, women sustained communities and became breadwinners for most Somali families. The empowerment of women is key to the development of Somalia, the progress of its economy and good governance.



Sign featuring the official motto of the convention: "Somali Women's Convention: Forging Alliances to Safeguard Everyone's Rights".

Participants emphasized that the constitution review as well as the development of electoral and political party laws provide key windows of opportunity to promote and institutionalize women's rights and empowerment. To seize this opportunity, women have to stand united and actively mobilize. They should also be represented in bodies charged with the constitution review.

Delegates called for Somalia's constitution to fully promote and protect women's rights. In particular they demanded that the constitution provide for women to take up 50% of all elected and appointed position, including in politics, the civil service, the military and the judiciary. This quota should be included in clear and specific language.

Participants also called for electoral and political party laws to fully promote women's political participation, including by reflecting this quota. To ensure women's political participation as Somalia moves towards a multi-party system, women's representation in political parties must be strengthened significantly. Delegates noted that women's presence in political institutions is only a first step. Female politicians must then be empowered to effectively influence decision-making and promote a gender equality and women's empowerment agenda. Women must stand united and hold all MPs to account for passing gender equity and equality legislation.



A young participant points to a conference sign reading: "The first priority of the government is to ensure women's equal participation in politics."

Participants emphasized that women's economic empowerment is critical to the future of Somalia, contributing directly to the countries' economy from the level of the family to the national level.

Women's innovative ideas can make an important contribution to the advancement of Somalia and to the resilience of its people, if adequately promoted and protected. To advance women's economic empowerment and their roles in businesses, women must have access to loans, investment and government contracts. Delegates also highlighted the need for laws that promote and protect women's role in business, innovation and the economy. Women should be given a quota in the leadership of businesses, and take on a greater role in the ministries and public agencies concerned with the economy.

Delegates agreed that changing climate and environmental conditions have serious impacts on Somali society and require urgent attention from all stakeholders. These changes have distinct and important effects on women and girls, including by undermining their health and access to education. At the same time, women can be part of the solution and make important contributions in diminishing the impact of climate change. Women should be empowered to participate in decision-making about responses to climate change and the development of more effective coping strategies leading to increased resilience.

Delegates expressed concern that Somalia's history of civil war and emergencies has increased the severity of sexual and gender-based violence and other violations experienced by women.

The tradition and culture of protecting women, 'Biri ma geysa' has been eroded. Participants emphasized that FGM and sexual and gender-based violence are not in line with Islam and Somali culture. Men and boys are also affected by sexual and gender-based violence and must be part of the solution.

Delegates called for the passage of the Sexual Offences Bill (SOB), and other legislation on gender-based violence and FGM as the first priority in addressing sexual and gender-based violence in Somalia. They urged civil society, religious leaders, government, women and men to join forces to lobby for the passing of the SOB. In particular, they called for parliament to play its role in passing the legislation to protect Somalis from sexual and gender-based violence.

Delegates emphasized that the law must supersede all traditional and cultural practices that harm women's rights. They also noted the urgent need to build the capacity of the justice sector to respond to women's specific concerns, including by increasing the level of women's representation in the justice sector.



Conference delegates during the opening of the convention.



Hibo Yassin shares lessons from the drafting of the Provisional Constitution as part of the opening panel for Session 1.

SESSION 1.

The Somalia Provisional Constitution Reviewed Through a Gender Lens

Background and Introduction

Somalia is in the process of revising its constitution. Drawing on popular participation, the review is led by the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs in collaboration with the Oversight Committee of the Federal Parliament and an Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission. The review is to conclude with a popular vote in 2020. Somalia currently uses a Provisional Constitution adopted in 2012. While this document includes a number of gender equality provisions, important gaps remain. In particular, the Provisional Constitution stopped short of enshrining one of the key demands of the Somali women's movement: a quota for women's representation in public institutions. In this context, women's leaders have highlighted the constitutional review as a unique opening to secure women's rights. Through panel and group discussion, the first session of the Convention provided an opportunity to assess what has been achieved for women's rights in the constitution review so far and which areas must be strengthened.

Panelists

Dr. Hussein Abdi Elmi

Deputy Minister for Constitutional Affairs

Hibo Yassin

Head of Policy, Communication and Fundraising Unit, IIDA Women's Development Organisation

Halima Jama

Civil society representative, founding member of The Somali Women Agenda (SWA) and former member of the Constitution Committee

In introductory remarks, the chair of the discussion, Cabdisataar Maxamed Geelle, (Director of Secretariat and Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the President, Federal Republic of Somalia) highlighted that, following a long history of conflict, women make up more than 50 % of society and head many households. The constitution review provides an important opportunity to promote their rights and empowerment. The main objective of the Women's Convention is to bring women on board and up to speed so that they, too, can provide inputs and secure their rights in the on-going process.

Deputy Minister for Constitutional Affairs **Dr. Hussein Abdi Elmi** emphasized that human rights are one of the priorities of the government - and that this includes the protection of the rights of women, who are the backbone of the Somali society. The government has the responsibility to protect the whole society and to ensure that all laws are adhered to.

The Deputy Minister commended the Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, H.E. Deqa Yasin, for initiating the Women's Convention. He emphasized that it is important that Somali women become aware of - and involved in - the constitutional process.

The Deputy Minister recalled that women have organized and made important contributions to the constitution-making process, which resulted in the current provisional constitution. However, one of the main objectives of women's mobilization, affirmative action that would ensure their inclusion in appointed and elected positions, was not included in the revised constitution agreed in 2012. The Deputy Minister highlighted that the role of the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs is not to draft the constitution themselves, but to present issues to society and provide citizens with the opportunity to create their constitution. He called for women to get ready to participate in the review process, which will take place in all member states. Once the collecting of views is completed, the draft constitution will go to a popular vote. The Deputy Minister emphasized that the opportunity women have today to promote their rights is special. In 2012, the window of opportunity was not as large. Today, there are more opportunities for participation, more consultations and openings to interact with the Ministry and other government agencies concerned with reviewing the constitution.

Hibo Yassin reflected on the drafting of the Provisional Constitution in 2012 and lessons learned in this context, on behalf of IIDA Women's Development Organization (IIDA), the Somali Women's Agenda (SWA) and other like-minded CSOs. In particular, she retraced the steps these organizations took to influence the process. Their journey began in 2005 when they volunteered and were nominated, through the efforts of their international partners, to be part of the Somali peace and state building process taking place in Kenya at that time. At this juncture, the peace process had birthed the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC) that replaced the 2000 Transitional National Charter (TNC). The TFC established the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) and the Transitional Federal Constitutional Commission (FCC) - later renamed as the Independent Federal Constitutional Commission (IFCC), that was tasked with the responsibility of drafting the Federal Constitution.

Although the IFCC work suffered significant delays, IIDA, SWA and like-minded CSOs never faltered in their faith in the process. They lobbied to have women representation increased in the 15 member IFCC, which only comprised two women initially. Following the expansion of the TFP membership to 550 in line with the 2008 11-point Djibouti Framework agreement, they took advantage of the opportunity and lobbied for more women to be included in the now to be expanded IFCC. This was done with the support of strong personalities in the Somali Government that joined their cause, such as Hon. Fauzia, then Minister of Women and Family Affairs, and the late Hon. Madoobe Nunow, Minister



Human rights are one of the priorities of the government. This includes the protection of the rights of women, who are the backbone of the Somali society.

It is important that Somali women become aware of – and involved in – the constitutional process...The opportunity women have today to promote their rights is special.

Dr. Hussein Abdi Elmi, Deputy Minister for Constitutional Affairs

The Bill of Rights of the Provisional constitution reflects some of women's demands very well. However, one of the key demands raised by the women's movement was conspicuously missing in the final text: the quota for women. Nevertheless, one of the lessons from the development of the Provisional Constitution is that progress on gender equality and women's rights can be achieved if supported by effective, pro-active mobilization.

Hibo Yassin, Head of Policy, Communication and Fundraising Unit, IIDA Women's Development Organisation

of Constitution Affairs. The team also brought on board H.E. Omar Abdirashid Sharmarke, then Prime Minister of Somalia. Thanks to all of these concerted efforts the members of the IFCC were joined by seven additional women, one of whom (Hon. Sarah Omar) was elected as the Chairperson of the expanded IFCC.

During the Kampala peace process, the civil society group went on to support 120 Somali CSOs, networks and movements of women and men to come and voice their ideas. Likeminded CSO networks presented memoranda on key issues to be included in the post-transition governance architecture of Somalia. Their participation, throughout the (Garowe I, Garowe II and Galkayo) peace processes and agreements also helped to define the space for women representation in Somalia. During Garowe II, the team of likeminded CSOs were part of the core group that successfully lobbied and petitioned to have women representation increased from 20%-30%. Indeed, by August 2012 when the IFCC released a preliminary Consultation Draft Constitution (CDC), many of these gains had already been inserted into the draft document. The civil society group then supported IFCC to carry out civic education and public consultation on CDC. They also worked with experts to perform gender audits of the draft document, while other experts tested the draft constitution for compliance with Islamic principles, democracy and social justice. As a result, the team was able to highlight a few discrepancies in the draft document and prepared a report, which was handed over to the IFCC. Hibo Yassin noted that some of their suggestions were included in the Provisional Constitution that still governs the Federal Republic of Somalia to date. During the National Constituent Assembly, in August 2012, her civil society team was also present to deliberate and polish the Provisional Constitution for adoption.

Hibo Yassin concluded that their success had only been possible because they managed, over the years, to gain the trust of the people they represent, which in turn had made it possible for those charged with the responsibility of drafting the constitution to have faith in their work. The civil society coalition stepped forward and volunteered to be part of the constitution- making journey at a time when few people could muster the courage to stand up. While many of women's demands were reflected in the Provisional Constitution, one of their key demands was however conspicuously missing in the final text: the quota for women. Nevertheless, one of the lessons from this process is that progress on gender equality and women's rights can be achieved if supported by effective, pro-active mobilization. Hibo Yassin noted that, while there is currently only one woman in the constitution committee, the Ministry is very supportive of women's mobilization. She emphasized that civil society stands ready to support the Ministry in any way possible, including through their capacity to engage with the grassroots in all regions. In a project called 'Heshiis Bulsho' (Social Contract), IIDA Women's Development Organization is working to bring together civil society members from different regions of the country to deliberate on the draft constitution and develop joint inputs to be shared with the Ministry.

Discussing targets in terms of women's rights in the constitution going forward, **Halima Jama** (founding member of The Somali Women Agenda (SWA) and former member of the Constitution Committee) emphasized that women's fair representation in politics is key to the development of Somalia, the progress of its economy and the key to good governance. She emphasized that the review of the constitution is a great opportunity to advance women's rights and participation – an opportunity that will not always be available. The constitution is still a draft, it has not been passed. The development of the draft must therefore be watched closely to ensure women's rights provisions currently integrated are not dropped, while working to extend them further. Halima Yama concluded: "if we do this, there will be just power sharing, prosperity and peace."



Women's fair representation in politics is key to the development of Somalia, the progress of its economy and the key to good governance. The review of the constitution is a great opportunity to advance this objective – an opportunity that will not always be available.

Halima Jama, former member of the Constitution Committee



Conference participants discuss key demands for women's rights in working group.



The federal constitution and those of the federal member states should be in accordance with each other in the full promotion and protection of women's rights.

Conclusion by conference delegates in group discussion

In discussion between the panel and the audience, participants similarly called for the constitution to provide a quota for women's participation. They also emphasized the need to ensure that political parties subsequently follow the quota as Somalia moves from the current 4.5. clan system to a multi-party one. Participants noted that the clan system has posed a key obstacle to women's participation in decision-making and called for the constitution to help Somalia move away from the clan system. Participants and panelists emphasized the need to promote the representation of women with disabilities in particular.

During **breakout groups**, participants concluded that the Women's Charter produced at the conference should call for the inclusion of a women's quota in the immutable principles of the constitution. Specifically, the constitution should provide for women to be granted 50% of all elected and appointed positions, including in parliament and other political institutions, the military, the civil service and the judiciary. They noted that constitutional articles related to the women's quota should be written in clear language, which is not open to different interpretations. They emphasized that the constitution is the only channel through which women can obtain their quota. They affirmed their determination to work together to seize this important window of opportunity and to ensure affirmative action is subsequently reflected in other regulations to be passed by parliament, including the Electoral and Political Party Law.

Participants further called for the constitution to promote and protect the rights of vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities, minority groups, youth and children – and for this demand to be reflected in the Charter. Participants noted that women are still considered second-class citizens and the need for the Women's Charter to recall that women are full citizens, just like men.

Participants highlighted that, to ensure their demands for women's rights are realized, educated, capable women should be included in the Independent Provisional Constitution Review and Implementation Commission, tasked to oversee the review of the Provisional Constitution. They also highlighted the urgent need for women and all Convention delegates to unite behind their joint demands and support them with courage and determination.

This includes young women, who can make an important contribution in the promotion of women's affairs, and women representatives in the house of the people and upper house of parliament who must come together to ensure the quota becomes a reality and leads to women's effective influence. Delegates called for the Women's Charter to affirm women's unity around issues that concern them.

Participants also demanded for funds to be established to finance lobbying for women's issues and the quota in the constitution, and to secure their implementation. Participants moreover flagged that they should conduct a review of the draft constitution, studying every article of the constitution through the lens of women's rights. They recommended that once the constitution is finalized, a women's committee or other agency should be set up to ensure that the women's quota is effectively implemented. Participants emphasized that the federal constitution and those of the federal member states should be in accordance with each other in the full promotion and protection of women's rights.



Breakout groups deliberating on main points to be included in the Somali Women's Charter.



The constitution should provide for women to be granted 50 % of all elected and appointed positions, including in parliament and other political institutions, the military, the civil service and the judiciary.

Conclusion by conference delegates in group discussion

Summary of Key Themes of the Discussion:

- Women are the backbone of Somali society and their empowerment is key to the development of Somalia, the progress of its economy and good governance.
- The constitution review provides a key window of opportunity to promote women's rights and empowerment.
- To seize this opportunity, women have to stand united and actively mobilize. They must also meaningfully participate in bodies charged with the constitution review.
- Somalia's constitution should fully promote and protect women's rights.
- In clear and specific language, the constitution should provide for women to take up 50 % of all elected and appointed positions, including in politics, the civil service, the military and the judiciary.
- Particular attention is needed to protect the rights of vulnerable groups of women and girls, such as those living with disabilities, those from minority groups, as well as youth and children.



A conference participant representing Somali youth poses a question to the session's opening panel.

SESSION 2.

Women's Political Participation

Background and Introduction

Somalia is currently developing Electoral and Political Party Laws, which will govern the country's first one-person one-vote elections in 2020/21 and move Somalia from a clan-based to a multi-party political system. These processes provide important opportunities to enshrine women's full participation in the foundations of Somalia's political system. In this context, Somalia can build on the experience of the 2016 elections, where women attained 24 % of seats in parliament, up from 12 % in previous elections. However, in contrast to this level of representation in parliament, the participation of women in leadership and decision-making across the different federal member states and other decision-making bodies remains limited. What is more, the increase in women's parliamentary representation in the 2016 federal elections largely resulted from a political commitment to women's representation at the time, rather than binding, enduring legal provisions. While the Provisional Constitution adopted in 2012 provides that "women must be included, in an effective way, in all national institutions" (Article 3(5)), what is 'effective' remains open to interpretation. In this context, the second thematic session of the Somalia Women's Convention provided an opportunity to review challenges and opportunities for women's political participation in Somalia through panel and group discussion.

Panelists

Halima Ismail

Chair, National Independent Electoral Commission, Federal Republic of Somalia

Asha Gelle

Former member and inaugural chair of the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission tasked to oversee the review of the Provisional Constitution, politician and civil society activist, former Minister of Women Development and Family Affairs for Puntland State

Adam Matan

OBE, Founder Anti-Tribalism Movement, a non-profit organization addressing effects of tribalism within communities, and recipient of an order of the British Empire award ('Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire' (OBE))

Mrs. **Asha Gelle**, former member of the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission tasked to oversee the review of the Provisional Constitution, began by recounting some of the history of women's public participation in Somalia. She highlighted that as the condition of the country and Somali society changed, women's challenges as well as platforms available to them also changed. During Siyad Barre's government, women used the government-backed Somali Mother's Association (Ururka Hooyooyinka Soomaaliyeed), which served as an umbrella that brought Somali women together and provided an opportunity for them to participate in public life. After the outbreak of the civil war and the collapse of the central government, women's roles in society changed. Many became family breadwinners, in addition to performing their traditional tasks as mothers and daughters. During this period, one approach that women used to address their challenges was to form women's civil society organizations and networks in the South, Central, Puntland and Somaliland regions. Some of these organizations played active roles in women's affairs. Following the formation of semi-autonomous regional administration, ministries dedicated to women's affairs were formed under the regional state administrations of Puntland, Somaliland and others in South Central. This was a way for women to address their concerns until a stable effective government could be achieved in Somalia.

Mrs. Asha Gelle noted that the clan system is one of the mechanisms by which opponents of women's political participation suppress women's voice. She highlighted that after a long and relentless struggle, advocates managed to get men to commit to a 30 % quota for women in the context of the 2016 elections. Despite this approval, male decision-makers challenged women to get the approval of their respective clans as well. Asha Gelle highlighted that one reason why the Provisional Constitution does not explicitly provide for the quota for women is the lack of women's representation in the constitution-making committee that was charged with developing the Provisional Constitution. Based on this experience, she urged women to rally behind and support the Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Minister Deqa, Yasin who is working relentlessly to ensure women's voices are heard in all public spheres. Finally, Asha Gelle expressed her disappointment (and that of Somali women) with those women in parliament who fail to advance the agenda of the women they represent. As an example she cited the bid of two women MPs for the post of Deputy Speaker of Parliament who received only few votes.

Picking up on this point, **Halima Ismail**, the Chairwoman of the National Independent Electoral Commission, argued that women should learn from this incident. Women should not only focus on numbers but also consider the quality of the women who are to represent Somali women. She illustrated this assertion with the Election Commission, which she chairs. Though women constitute only two out of the nine commissioners, according to Ismail, they have been successful in amplifying women's voices in their work.

The Chairwoman noted that one of the key issues influencing women's political participation in both the short and long-term is their representation in political parties, as the country is moving to a multi-party system. Although the Election Commission ensures that the women's quota is respected by requiring all political parties to be registered to ensure that at least 30% of their top leadership are women, so far the country's registered political parties are mainly dominated by men. The Chairwoman also highlighted that the current parliament poses one of the obstacles in the passing of laws that promote women's political participation. She urged women, those in the government, members of civil society and businesswomen, to lobby for such legislation among MPs and senators and ensure that laws promoting gender equality and women's participation are passed. Finally, she reported that the Commission has set up its own gender unit, which is in charge of promoting women's participation in the coming general elections in the country.



After the outbreak of civil war, women's roles in society changed. Many became family breadwinners, in addition to performing their traditional tasks as mothers and daughters.

One reason why the Provisional Constitution does not explicitly provide for the quota for women is that all members of the Constitution-making Committee were men.

Ms. Asha Gelle, former member of the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission

One of the key issues influencing women's political participation is their representation in political parties as the country is moving to a multi-party system. So far, we have registered 39 political parties. Only one party has a female chairperson, the National Democratic Party led by Honourable Fowsiya Xaaji Aaadan. I think there are only two parties that have either a female deputy or general secretary. In other words, political parties are exclusively dominated by men. That is an indication of the status of women in terms of their political participation.

Halima Ismail, Chairwoman, National Independent Electoral Commission

Adam Matan spoke further to the challenges that Somali women face today in participating in politics, noting that the first set of obstacles relates to the constitution and other laws of the country. The biggest concern in this area, he noted, is that, although women were allocated a share of seats in parliament in the last elections, this quota is not included in the current constitution or in any of the other laws of the country. He called for the women's quota to be included in the constitution, electoral and other laws in unambiguous language that is not open to different interpretations. According to Adam Matan, the second challenge is posed by the transition from the 4.5 clan-based system to a multi-party-political system. In this context the challenge is how to sustain the level of representation of women that was achieved through the 4.5 system within the new system marked by political parties. Women, and men who support them, he argued, should unite in ensuring that the new system does not deny the women's quota or reduce it from what has been achieved so far.

The third challenge that women face today, according to Adam Matan, is the use of religion to deny women's rights. He attributed this to the fact that all religious scholars are men who interpret religious texts from their male perspectives. In order to overcome such misguided interpretations, Adam Matan suggested women should also become religious scholars themselves. Finally, Mr. Adam Matan pointed out that Somali women lack a strong feminist ideology that drives their activism and underpins all their work. He highlighted the need to develop shared agendas and ideological foundations that unite women and drive their activism. Such ideologies, according to Adam Matan, can be used to overcome the limitations that clan sets on women. He also noted that this would increase the likelihood that women who advance the women's agenda are elected to represent women. Men would surely elect any women to meet the criteria of the women's quota – but these women would not necessarily be the ones who have the capacity to represent women and work to advance the women's agenda. To conclude, Mr. Adam Matan reminded delegates that it is their responsibility to take the Charter to every Somali woman and every house so that people will learn about it.



Conference participants discuss their demands for women' rights in group work.



The biggest concern for women's political participation is that the women's quota is not included in the current constitution or in any of the other laws of the country. The women's quota must be provided for in the revised constitution, electoral and other laws in unambiguous language that is not open to different interpretations.

Adam Matan OBE, Founder Anti-Tribalism Movement

Opportunities for women's political participation include the fact that large numbers of female politicians are prepared and interested to participate in public decision-making, despite the many challenges involved.

Outcome of group discussion among delegates

During **group discussion**, participants noted that a key challenge in advancing women's political participation is the lack of awareness of women's capacities and contributions among many male gatekeepers. As a result, male politicians are often opposed to women joining their ranks. Opportunities for women's political participation include the fact that large numbers of female politicians are prepared and interested to participate in public decision-making, despite the many challenges involved. Importantly, women can also build on their experience in campaigning for a 30 % quota in the 2016 elections. The fact that women already achieved 24 % representation in parliament as a result of these elections, enhancing women's influence in the political arena, also presents an opportunity and shows that real progress in women's political participation is possible.

Delegates also agreed that the revision of the constitution, as well as the development of electoral and political party laws provide key windows of opportunity to advance women's political participation. Participants called for each of these laws and frameworks to provide concrete measures to advance women's political participation. Participants specifically called for a 50% women's quota, highlighting that this affirmative action is crucial to enable women's political participation and inclusive politics. They also emphasized that a powerful awareness-raising campaign is a must to achieve women's full political participation. Delegates moreover called for the creation of a committee that will campaign for women's issues in elections



The constitution, electoral and political party laws must provide concrete measures to advance women's political participation, including a 50% women's quota. This affirmative action is crucial to enable women's political participation and inclusive politics in Somalia.

Outcome of group discussion among delegates

Summary of Key Themes of the Discussion:

- Women have played important roles in sustaining Somali society, including as breadwinners during conflict and through their work in civil society. Their political participation is key to inclusive politics and the development of Somalia.
- However, women face serious, distinct obstacles to political participation, including gender-based discrimination by male gatekeepers.
- The revision of the constitution and the development of electoral and political party laws provide key windows of opportunity to advance women's political participation.
- The constitution, electoral and political party laws should provide concrete measures to advance women's political participation, including a 50 % women's quota specified in clear language.
- To ensure women's political participation as Somalia moves towards a multi-party system, women's representation in political parties must be strengthened significantly.
- Women's presence in political institutions is only a first step. Female politicians must then be empowered to effectively influence decision-making and promote a women's agenda. Women must stand united and hold all MPs to account for passing gender equality legislation.
- Opportunities for women's political participation include the fact that large numbers of female politicians are prepared and interested to participate in public decision-making, despite the many challenges involved.



Gamal Mohamed Hassan, Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, Federal Government of Somalia

SESSION 3.

Women's Economic Participation as a Key Element in Achieving the NDP

Background and Introduction

Women's economic empowerment makes a critical contribution to gender equality, the welfare of families and communities, and to post-conflict recovery. Due to the history of conflict and disasters, half of all Somali households are currently headed by women and the number of female-headed households continues to grow. This further increases the significance of women's economic participation for Somali society. Somalia's current National Development Plan (NDP, 2017 – 2019) recognizes that "Peace, stability and development can only be efficiently achieved by addressing the obstacles women face to fully contribute to their country's development." In this context, the NDP aims to promote gender equality and women's empowerment both as key development objectives in their own right and as a critical ingredient for sustainable development. This session provided an opportunity to discuss women's economic empowerment and its role in achieving the National Development Plan.

Panelists

Gamal Mohamed Hassan

Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, Federal Government of Somalia

Deeq Yusuf

Director General, Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, Federal Government of Somalia

Nasra Wehliye

CFO, Nation Link Telecom, one of the leading telecommunications operators in Somalia

Qadiijo Cali

Business Woman from Minnesota, USA, founder of Global Language Connections, recipient of Women in Business Award, Minnesota

In introductory remarks, the chair of this session, Sahra Kooshin (Development Practitioners and PhD Candidate, UN Mandated University for Peace), highlighted that women's economic empowerment has ripple effects for their children, for the family and society. When women are economically empowered, they gain increased respect in their communities.

Nasra Wehliye, CFO of Nation Link, a company that employs over a thousand people, noted that Somali women are known to have always played an active role in business. Women have led many businesses in the country and have been and still are the backbone of the Somali economy. Amongst other activities, women have provided on demand basic necessities to families through home delivery. This shows the creativity and ingenuity with which Somali women solve everyday problems in their communities using sustainable means. As a result of civil war, women took on an even more active role in business and the economy, becoming the breadwinners for most Somali families. This means that empowering Somali women in businesses contributes directly to Somalia's economy, from the level of the family to the national level.

Nasra Weheliye highlighted that women must have access to financing options. In Somalia, it is usually men who have these opportunities. She noted that microfinance is one of the approaches that can be used to empower women in business. Governments and banks can provide women with loans, which they can pay back. Somali women however do not have such opportunities, which she advised should be highlighted in the Charter. Government contracts are also not given to women – only men are benefiting from these. Women should obtain 50% of such contracts.

Wehliye further noted that women should have a role in the ministries concerned with the economy. While the Ministry of Commerce is responsible for promoting businesses and commercial activities, the Chamber of Commerce is the gateway of Somali businesses to the world. It should be noted that none of the 20 departments or so of the Chamber of Commerce is headed by women. Men dominate all of these spaces and they tend to help other men, rather than women. The opportunities that come through this important gateway therefore go to men. Opportunities should also be given to women and they should be included in the Chamber of Commerce. The government should support women to be able to bid for the big contracts and break the monopoly of the male-owned company.

According to Nasra Wehliye, NationLink is one of the few companies that gives a significant share of its employment and business opportunities to women. She suggested that this is because she, a woman, is a member of the board, and one of the founders. Nasra Weheliye emphasized that women have the power to demand all kinds of opportunities from all companies. They are the largest customers for almost any company. Women can boycott companies' products if these companies do not practice gender equality or do not employ enough women.

Reflecting on her own experience and lessons in setting up a thriving company in the USA (Global Language Connections), **Qadijo Cali** noted that, as a young immigrant in the United States, she learned that there is an unmet demand in the area of language services: interpretation and translation. Although she had no university degree, no experience in running a business, no finance or networks, she tried to identify a solution, seizing whatever opportunities could be found in the USA for women in business. Today her company provides language services in over 200 languages.

Legal provisions helped support her. Qadijo Cali's business was certified as women owned, which, in combination with the competence of her company, supported her business in gaining contracts. She worked with a group called Civic Alliance who support women from minority groups who are doing business in the United



Women are the backbone of the Somali economy... During the civil war, women became breadwinners for most families. Empowering Somali women in businesses contributes directly to Somalia's economy, from the level of the family to the national level.

Women must have access to financing options and government contracts. In Somalia it is usually men who have these opportunities.

Women should have a role in the ministries concerned with the economy.

Nasra Wehliye, Nation Link

Investing in a woman's business means investing in an entire family, in a community and the economy as a whole. Affirmative actions for groups such as women are therefore important.

Qadijo Cali, businesswoman, USA, founder of Global Language Connections

States. The group helps women-owned businesses increase their business through business services support and through networking events with potential clients. Qadijo Cali also joined the board of directors of many of the organizations that supported her. While she initially questioned what they would gain out of helping her, she eventually learnt that their driving philosophy is that investing in women has positive ripple effects for all individuals and groups connected to these women. Studies show that women always represent more than an individual; they are a family, a community and a nation. Investing in a woman's business means investing in an entire family, in a community and the economy as a whole. Affirmative actions for groups such as women are therefore important and the government can help develop these policies.

Based on her experience Qadijo Cali highlighted that legislation is key – this is the main step to empower women and to create a level playing field. She also emphasized the importance of collaboration between the government and private sector. Neither of them can solve all problems. The government can put in place laws and infrastructure that support businesses as long as the business is benefiting its local people.

Deeq Yusuf, Director General in the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, noted that in order to understand an issue, we must ask those who are affected. If you want to know about poverty, talk to poor people. Among the panelists, he emphasized, he sees himself as an apprentice. Others have direct experience of working as women in business and in economic development. The Director General highlighted that women have played important roles in business through history. He recalled the story of the Prophet Muhammed and his beloved wife Khadija. Before their marriage, the prophet worked for Khadija, who was an international businesswoman. Her business reached Arabia and Persia. In Islamic history, a woman was the minister of finance during Omar's period. Deeq Yusuf emphasized that the Somali government is committed to empowering Somali women. This is clear in the National Development Plan, which includes a specific pillar (Pillar 9) on human rights and gender. The government's and the Ministry's agenda is to ensure that all ministries include women's empowerment in their plans and agendas. The Director General concluded that we should not only focus on microfinance in terms of women's economic empowerment. As Nasra Weheliye indicated, we should move beyond this. As Qadijo Cali advised, we should learn from international practices.

Offering further reflections on the role of women's empowerment in the National Development Plan, **Gamal Mohamed Hassan** (Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development) highlighted that the current National Development Plan has been in place since 2017. One of its nine pillars focuses on women's issues and human rights. Specific targets in this area include for women to assume 30% of leadership positions and to significantly decrease gender-based violence. Progress is currently being evaluated and it appears that an area where targets have not been achieved is women's economic empowerment. When it comes to economic power, we should be aware that women do not have appropriate access to property or credit.

The Minister highlighted that the government is developing a new national development plan, which will be in place for the coming 5 years. In terms of women's participation in decision-making, he noted, we want to go beyond 30% because we have highly educated women. The Minister highlighted that the majority of families are led by single mothers. Their economic empowerment is critical to the future of Somalia. Bankruptcy rates are also lower among women led companies. The Minister noted that one of the government's targets is to sign an agreement empowering Somali women to invest and partner with foreign companies.



The government's and the Ministry agenda is to ensure that all ministries include women's empowerment in their plans and agendas.

Deeq Yusuf, Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development

We are currently evaluating progress in NDP implementation. It appears that one area where targets have not been achieved is women's economic empowerment.

The majority of families are led by single mothers. Their economic empowerment is critical to the future of Somalia.

Gamal Mohamed Hassan, Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development

During **group discussion**, participants identified several steps that should be taken to support women's roles in business. Women should have access to loans and investment. Agricultural cooperatives should be established for women. Moreover, insurance should be put in place for the protection of women-owned small businesses. Women should also be given a quota in the leadership of businesses. Participants further called for the establishment of platforms that can bring together women in businesses so that they can share ideas and lessons.

Participants moreover identified several interventions needed from the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MOWHRD) specifically. First of all, there should be coordination among different ministries that work on issues relevant to women's economic empowerment and the MOWHRD should take the lead in ensuring that all government ministries and agencies respond to the needs of women. In particular, the Ministry should support women in engaging with the Ministry of Commerce so that it becomes more responsive to the needs of women. The MOWHRD should also take the lead in creating laws that protect women in small businesses and offer support to women in the capital and across the federal member states. Laws that regulate businesses should be developed.

Delegates also noted that MOWHRD should conduct a mapping of women in businesses (what they do, the challenges they meet etc.) and register women in business so that it can identify those that need support. Women must then be provided with appropriate skills training. Participants called for the Ministry to develop a strategy for the development of women's businesses and set up a dedicated department for women's businesses. It should also seek to provide employment for young women and women with disabilities. Buildings from which women can run their businesses are also needed.



Women must have access to loans and investment.

Women should be given a quota in the leadership of businesses.

There is a need for laws that that protect women in small businesses and the MOWHRD should take the lead in creating them.

Conclusion of group discussion among delegates

Summary of Key Themes of the Discussion:

- Women have provided the backbone of Somalia's economy. Their roles increased further during conflict, with women becoming breadwinners for most Somali families.
- Women's economic empowerment is critical to the future of Somalia, contributing directly to the countries' economy from the level of the family to the national level.
- To promote women's economic empowerment, women must have access to loans, investment and government contracts.
- There is a need for laws that promote and protect women's role in business and the economy.
- Women should be given a quota in the leadership of businesses.
- Women should have a greater role in the ministries and public agencies concerned with the economy



The opening panel for Session 4 discusses Somali women's experiences of climate change and resilience.

SESSION 4.

Women, Climate Change and Resilience

Background and Introduction

Somalia has experienced major climate-induced shocks on a 2 to 5-year cycle, including severe droughts, flooding and cyclones. These shocks have caused massive displacement and crisis for basic supplies. While the majority of the Somalia population is vulnerable to climate change, women and youth have been identified as the most vulnerable groups. At the same time, women's responsibilities in households, communities, and as stewards of natural resources position them well to serve as agents for change and to help develop more effective responses to changing environmental realities. However, women tend to be excluded from decision-making on natural resources and natural disasters, which is often conducted through meetings of clan elders. They are also less likely to receive tailored support to cope with the distinct effects of climate-induced shocks on their lives. This session provided an opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities posed by women's experiences of climate change and resilience.

Panelists

Prof. Abdullahi Elmi Asad
Senior Expert in Environment,
Water and Climate

Amaal Said Jamac
Co-founder, Women in
Renewable Energy Somalia
(WIRES), an organization
supporting women's ability to
engage in sustainable natural
resource management

Zahra Abukar Ismail
Graduate student, Climate
Change and Environmental
Sustainability, Amoud
University

Asli Ducaale
Somali Water Partnership
and funding Chair of WEAVE,
Women Education and
Voicing Entrepreneurship,
a Somali NGO set up in 2008
in Mogadishu

The panelists agreed that the impacts of climate change are no longer merely a topic of discussion among academics but a reality with serious implications for Somali people.

Prof. Abdullahi Elmi Asad emphasized that in Somalia climate change is a pressing issue that needs urgent interventions from all stakeholders.

He noted that Somali society is closely dependent on climate in all aspects of life. Water and pasture, two key ingredients for the life of Somali society, are the product of climatic conditions, specifically the availability of rain. Scarcity of these resources puts pressure on communal relations, at times leading to conflict. Due to such dynamics, climate change has been recognized as an important factor in global security. Prof. Asad emphasized that climate change has distinct and serious effects on women and girls. Water scarcity, for example, means that many young girls will have to spend most of their time fetching water from wells placed at longer distance instead of going to school. This jeopardizes girls' education, a basic human right. A possible solution to this problem that can be explored, he suggested, are 'blue schools'. These are schools for girls where water is readily available.

Asli Ducaale of the Somali Water Partnership and founding Chair of the NGO WEAVE (Women Education and Voicing Entrepreneurship), highlighted that water is a scarce life-and-death commodity for most rural communities in Somalia, whose lives have been shaped by recurring droughts for the past decades. However, many Somali people may not understand the difference a cup of water can make in the lives of these rural communities. In this light, Ducaale called for awareness-raising about the value of water and its scarcity in rural communities.

Asli Ducaale highlighted that in the past trees were important to Somali people and Somali culture. Communities used to name every tree in their areas. Trees functioned as a communal meeting place to which everyone was connected. However, deforestation has since posed a serious challenge. Trees have been cut extensively to turn them into charcoal either for export or for local consumption. As Asli Ducaale explained, the result, amongst others, is the disappearance of species, which were unique to Somalia and well suited to local climate conditions. Species imported from other countries may not grow in Somalia. Asli Ducaale finally highlighted that, after realizing its global impact, international donor organizations have allocated significant resources to reverse the effects of climate change. Given the serious effects climate change is having and will have on Somalia, groups involved in environmental issues should mobilize to ensure these funds are used to support Somalia in ending water scarcity and reversing the effects of climate change.

Zahra Abukar, a post-graduate student in environmental studies, concluded the session by highlighting that women's empowerment through education is the key solution. This will enable women to participate in decision-making about responses to climate change and develop more effective coping strategies.

In **group discussion**, participants affirmed that women are adversely and seriously affected by climate change, environmental conditions and pollution in many areas, including deforestation, droughts and the degradation of agricultural land, flooding, air pollution, littering and the pouring of poisonous waste into the sea. They highlighted a number of effects on women and girls, including hunger, the reduction of drinking water and the need to walk longer distances to fetch water, negative health consequences, including due to lack of proper sanitation, financial loss as farms along the river disappear due to flooding or degradation of land, as well as internal displacement.



Water scarcity means that many young girls will have to spend most of their time fetching water from longer distance wells instead of going to school. This jeopardizes girls' education, a basic human right.

Prof. Abdullahi Elmi Asad

International donor organisations have begun to allocate significant resources to combat climate change. Groups involved in environmental issues should mobilize to ensure these funds are used to support Somalia in ending water scarcity and reversing the serious effects of climate change.

Asli Ducaale

Women's empowerment through education is the key solution. This will enable women to participate in decision-making about responses to climate change and develop more effective coping strategies.

Ms. Zahra Abukar

Delegates highlighted that women can make important contributions in addressing climate change and its effects in Somalia, including by raising awareness about environmental degradation and advocate for relevant legislation, and alerting the authorities to illegal acts that damage the environment. Women also have a role to play in supporting job creation and resettlement of IDP. Participants further highlighted measures women can take in their everyday lives, including protecting and planting trees together, making tanks and pools to catch and save rain, ending the use of plastic utensils and plastic bags as well as trading in goods that harm the environment.



Delegates deliberate on key concerns to be included in the Somali Women's Charter.

Summary of Key Themes of the Discussion:

- Changing climate and environmental conditions have serious impacts on Somali society and require urgent attention from all stakeholders.
- These changes have distinct and important effects on women and girls, including by undermining their health and access to education.
- At the same time, women can be a key part of the solution and make important contributions in addressing climate change and its effects in Somalia.
- Women should be empowered to participate in decision-making regarding responses to climate change and the development of more effective coping strategies.



Sahra Mohamed Ahmed discusses key challenges in addressing sexual violence as part of the opening panel for Session 5.

SESSION 5.

Justice for Women and Girls

Background and Introduction

Following decades of civil war, Somalia is currently rebuilding its justice system. Extremely limited human and financial resources as well as physical infrastructure pose great challenges in this context. While these barriers affect all Somalis, women and girls face additional, distinct challenges in accessing justice. There is also a lack of women's representation in the development and application of the justice system, with only one female judge, for example. This further reduces the chances that women's distinct experiences and needs will be addressed in the justice system. Conflict and disasters have also increased levels of sexual and gender-based violence, adding further urgency to the creation of a justice system capable of responding to these concerns. This session provided an opportunity to discuss these and other challenges faced in securing justice for women and girls in Somalia.

Panelists

Mr. Axmed Cali Dahir
Attorney General, Somalia

Lawyer Tahliil Haji Ahmed
Lawyer, former judge, Managing
Director Horn Legal Consulting
Services

Sahra Mohamed Ahmed
Founder and a legal adviser, Somali
Women Development Centre

During panel discussion, the **Attorney General** highlighted that the violations women are facing have increased. In the past year over 210 cases have been prosecuted. There are approximately another 100 cases, which were not submitted to the court. After the government investigated cases, reporting increased. The crimes committed against women are varied. The largest proportion of cases are against people younger than 15. Young men are also increasingly becoming victims of rape. Children as young as one or two years are becoming victims.

The Attorney General noted that, while rape has taken place historically, due to the social collapse in Somalia, we now see extreme cases across the country. The Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development has prepared Somalia's first dedicated legislation on sexual and gender-based violence, the Sexual Offences Bill (SOB). The cabinet approved the SOB unanimously and the bill is now in parliament. The next challenge will be ensuring strong implementation.

The lawyer **Tahliil** highlighted that rape is an instrument of oppression and displacement. It is one of the factors forcing people to flee their homes. Women are not the only victims; men are also becoming victims. Tahliil emphasized that the high prevalence of rape is new; it is not part of Somali culture. He noted that the biggest problem is the stigmatization of the survivor, whether boy or girl. In part to avoid such stigma, and fearing damage to the honor of the individual survivor and his/her clan, family members and relatives of the survivor often hinder the work of prosecutors to secure justice for the survivor and instead resort to traditional means of reconciliation, which are less public.

Sahra Mohamed Ahmed, founder and legal advisor at the civil society organization Somali Women Development Centre, expressed her appreciation for the work of the Attorney General, noting that upon taking office he nominated six female officers to his office to take part in the judiciary system of the country. She highlighted that this was unprecedented. He then established a special department addressing sexual violence, which is led by women and provides a direct point of contact for those affected. She emphasized the need to further increase women's representation in the rule of law and justice systems, and the opportunity provided by the Somali Women's Convention to call for progress in this area.

Sahra Mohamed Ahmed highlighted that a key challenge they face in their voluntary work handling rape cases is that traditional elders often directly intervene. In order to counteract these and other challenges in addressing sexual violence, she called for a campaign to ensure the endorsement of the pending Sexual Offences Bill by parliament. Sahra Mohamed Ahmed noted that the lack of a forensic laboratory poses another challenge and urged for the establishment of such facilities by the Ministry of Health.

She emphasized that one reason for the recent increase in rape cases is that male teenagers use drugs like khat, which induce hallucinations. Her organization Somali Women Development Centre gathered the 17 districts of Benadir chairpersons to talk about the ways drug use among the youth can be reduced. She emphasized that victims of sexual violence are not only those living in IDPS camps, but also those living at home.

To counteract these trends, Sahra Mohamed Ahmed further urged religious leaders to start a campaign in the mosques to talk about the punishment of rape based on the Islamic religion. She emphasized that civil society also has an important role to play in addressing sexual violence. Some organizations already operate safe houses to provide accommodation and refuge to victims. The role of civil society is also to mobilize the community and conduct awareness raising campaigns on women's rights.



While rape has taken place historically, due to the social collapse in Somalia, we now see extreme cases across the country.

Mr. Axmed Cali Dahir, Attorney General, Somalia

Rape is an instrument of oppression and displacement. It is one of the factors that forces people to flee their homes.

Lawyer Tahliil Haji Ahmed, lawyer and former judge

One of the main challenges that survivors of sexual violence face while seeking justice is that written laws and Sharia often fail to be enforced and women are forced to accept solutions outside the legal system through informal agreement between clans.

Outcome of group discussion between delegates

During group discussion participants identified a number of challenges that survivors of sexual violence face while seeking justice. The first challenge is culture which sees talking about sexual offences as taboo. Written laws and Islamic sharia often fail to be implemented and women forced to accept solution outside the legal system through informal agreement between clans, such as marriage to the perpetrator or financial compensation. Lawyers and legal experts have faced intimidation when pursuing cases and the police and other law enforcement agencies may be bribed.

Participants called for the passing of the Sexual Offences Bill (SOB) by parliament. They noted that the three-day conference should issue a statement supporting the SOB. Women parliamentarians should demand the reading of the bill in parliament and the Minister of Women and Human Rights Development should be supported to present it at parliament.

Participants also called for steps to ensure laws on sexual offences can be effectively implemented. In particular, they highlighted the need for female prosecutors and attorneys to handle sexual offence cases. They also called for the Somali lawyer's association, dismantled in 1986, to be re-established. To do so, lawyers representing all regions of the country, including female representatives, should attend a general assembly. Lawyers should take on sexual offences cases pro bono.

Participants highlighted the need to invest in awareness-raising about the SOB at regional, district and village levels. People should understand that laws are above all other arrangements. Participants also highlighted the need for an effective criminal investigation department and to build the capacity of this department and of the police in investigating crimes related to sexual offenses. Participants further called for an emergency number for female survivors and the protection of the confidentiality of cases by lawyers and law enforcement agencies. Sexual offenses involving children and young women should not be submitted to military tribunal.

Participants also argued that regions should have their own children's courts. Such courts should also be able to handle offenses involving young women. Finally, participants called for the establishment of platforms for women and religious scholars where gender-related laws are discussed.



The Sexual Offences Bill (SOB) must be passed by parliament and the Women's Conference should issue a statement supporting the SOB.

To ensure access to justice for women and survivors of SGBV, women must be represented in the justice sector.

Platforms should be established where women and religious scholars can come together and discuss gender-related laws.

Outcome of group discussion between delegates

Summary of Key Themes of the Discussion:

- The social collapse in Somalia has increased the severity of sexual and gender-based violence and other violations experienced by women and girls. Rape is an instrument of oppression and displacement, forcing people to flee their homes.
- Men and boys are also affected by sexual and gender-based violence.
- Key obstacles to women's access to justice include, stigma, traditional practices interfering with formal justice processes, the low level of women's representation in the justice sector and the related lack of capacity in the justice sector to respond to women's specific concerns.
- Women's representation in justice sector must increase, including the availability of female prosecutors and attorneys to handle sexual offence cases.
- The Sexual Offences Bill (SOB) must be passed as a matter of urgency.
- All people must be aware that the law supersedes all other arrangements, including customary and traditional practices that discriminate against women.



The opening panel of Session 6 exchanges views and experiences of women's roles in innovation.

SESSION 6.

Innovation and Women Pioneers

Background and Introduction

The challenges involved in advancing gender equality, sustainable peace and development after conflict call for innovative approaches, including the use of new technologies. Somali women can and do play an important role in enhancing innovation. Some of their new ideas directly target women's empowerment. Women's leadership of such initiatives also advances gender equality indirectly by increasing societal appreciation of women's roles in innovation and new technologies, providing young Somali women and girls with role models, and encouraging other women to take the initiative to lead in their community's development. This session provided an opportunity to discuss the roles of Somali women in innovation and how these can be promoted further going forward.

Panelists

Sahra Alasow

Founder of several small-scale businesses focusing on creative arts to support unemployed youth

Iman Ahmed

Activist and head of youth organization Barbaarta Barakacayaasha, project manager at Samawat Energy, a female-founded renewable energy company

Sumaya Nur Abdi

Founder, Wadani Foods industry

Dr. Sadiyo Siad

Founder, Hano Group and Chancellor, Hano Academy

During panel discussion, **Sahra Alasow** explained that her innovation is concerned with art and culture. She has founded multiple small-scale businesses focusing on creative arts to support unemployed youth to make a living. One of these is the Suuban Arts painting and framing business for creative young people based in Mogadishu. Sahra Alasow highlighted that, as a result of the civil wars and killings they grew up with, the color that young people used in their art was initially mainly black. After her business worked with them, they started to use livelier colors. Now, the beautiful paintings used to decorate the hotel at which the convention is held are the ones these young people created.

Sumaya Nour Ali, founder of Wadani Foods Industry, highlighted that Somali women have always played an active, leading role in business. During the civil war, their resilience was what sustained what economy Somalia had. Women also prepared the current generation of leaders, despite the difficult circumstances. It is clear that Somali women can and do play an important role in economic development.

Iman Ahmed, activist and project manager at Samawat Energy, agreed that Somali women play an active role in business. Through their innovative business ideas, women can also contribute to the development of Somali society. They should have confidence in their capacities. Iman Ahmed encouraged women to build their own businesses based on their innovative ideas, rather than only waiting for employment. Her company Samawat Energy works in the sector of solar energy. This is a sector dominated by men-owned businesses and many people have negative attitudes towards women working in this sector. However, Samawat Energy was founded and owned by a young Somali woman. Now, 90% of employees are women.

Reflecting on the challenges faced by Somali women in business, panelists agreed that securing funding is the first challenge. Getting investment capital at the beginning of one's business is very difficult. Sumaya Nour Ali recounted that she started her meat (oodkac/ muqmad) business with just \$50. However, today, having established herself, many banks are willing to provide loans to her. She would encourage young women interested in business to start with whatever resources they can find and see where it goes. However, panelists agreed that the government and private banks should significantly increase their support to women in accessing funding.

During group discussion, participants concurred that a lack of starting capital or initial investment poses a critical challenge for women in business. Banks require women to come with a guarantor; they don't trust women. The government also does not support women businesses with investment capital. This is compounded by a lack of laws encouraging women's businesses. Women's ideas and innovations are often overlooked, not presented or stolen by others. Societal support for women-owned businesses also needs to increase. The lack of tax exemption for locally produced crops was highlighted as a further challenge.

Participants agreed that women's innovations in business can play a significant role in national development as women constitute 50% of the population. Women have creative ideas but they lack economic support and encouragement. Women's innovations could play an important role in promoting the economy of the country, creating jobs and thereby advancing stability; in raising awareness of women's active roles in society; and contributing to the organization and advancement of the country.

Participants called for the government and banks to support women's businesses with investment capital. They also urged large corporations to help protect, encourage, develop and invest in women's innovations. Moreover, they called for women's representation in the top management and leadership of such



Women can contribute to the development of our society with their innovative ideas.

Sahra Alasow

Somali women play an active role in business. They should have confidence in their capacities.

Iman Ahmed, Samawat Energy

A lack of starting capital poses a critical challenge for women in business. The government and banks should support women's businesses with investment capital.

Large corporations should help protect and promote women's innovations and women should be represented in their top management.

Outcome of group discussion among delegates

companies. Participants noted that women should additionally be involved in social projects that such companies engage in, including the construction of schools, hospitals and other public projects. Companies should refrain from establishing monopolies in their respective sectors. Participants also called for laws that protect the innovations of women who do not have capital.



Saynab Mohamed Xaji (Saynab Labadhagax), famous Somali singer

Summary of Key Themes of the Discussion:

- Somali women can and do play an important role in economic development and innovation, and their innovative ideas can make an important contribution to the development of Somalia.
- The lack of starting capital is the main challenge in empowering women in business and innovation. Government and banks should increase women's access to funding.
- There is a lack of laws supporting women in business and protecting innovations by women.
- Large corporations should help protect and promote women's innovations and women should be represented in their top management.



ROYAL PALACE HOTEL



Sheikh Hassan Ahmed Siyaar discusses the increase of sexual violence during the opening panel for Session 7.

SESSION 7.

Advocacy Around the Passing and Implementation of SOB and Anti-FGM Bills – Best Practices

Background and Introduction

Conflict, insecurity and disaster have increased levels of sexual and gender-based violence in Somalia. This violence undermines the health of survivors, their ability to contribute to Somalia's development, the cohesion of communities and trust in the state. At the same time, a reported 98 % of Somali women are affected by Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), undermining women and girls' health and access to education. To help address these challenges, under the leadership of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, the Federal Government of Somalia has developed the country's first dedicated legislation on gender-based violence: The Sexual Offences Bill. Unanimously passed by cabinet in May 2018, the bill is currently awaiting discussion in parliament. The government is also close to finalizing a draft bill on FGM. This session provided an opportunity to discuss how these and other responses to gender-based violence in Somalia can be advanced going forward.

Panelists

Sahra Omar Maalin
Member of Parliament
and Gender and Human
Rights Activist

Zahra Siyad Naley
Anti-FGM activist, senior
FGM project manager of
the Federation of Somali
Associations in the
Netherlands (FSAN)

Sheikh Cumar Xerow
Religious scholar

**Sheikh Hassan Ahmed
Siyaar**
Religious scholar

In panel discussion, **Sh. Hassan Ahmed Siyaar** noted that what happened this month to the girl Aisha shocked everybody. These crimes are new in Somalia. He emphasized that we need to first send our condolences to the victims of sexual and gender-based violence and we urge the government to support the victims financially. Sh. Hassan noted that the Islamic religion has a clear position on this issue: people who commit such acts are fighting Allah and the prophet, peace upon him. They are committing what Allah does not permit. He noted that those who support perpetrators of such violence do not deserve to be in public office.

Reflecting on the position of Islam with regard to FGM, **Sh. Cumar Xerow** highlighted that Islam is a religion of peace and kindness. It is a religion of honor that protects the honor and dignity of all human beings. FGM is an act that harms human beings and does not help them in any way. He emphasized that Allah is the creator of women, and He created them in the most perfect way. We should not assume we can improve on his work. Islam does not allow women's body to be cut. Sh. Omar and Sh. Hassan noted that the role of religious scholars in fighting FGM and sexual violence is to educate people, affirming that they will not hesitate to do so.

Zahra Siyaa Naleye, an anti-FGM activist, reminded participants that before the civil war, Somali women's associations, the Ministry of Education, and other agencies conducted a campaign against FGM. In 1988 a conference on FGM took place. Soon after, the civil war broke out. She noted that it is reality that 98% of Somali women are circumcised. Somalia is one of the 10 countries in the world where FGM is most prevalent. She emphasized that civil society organizations have an important role to play in raising awareness of sexual violence and lobbying for the draft legislation on sexual offences (the Sexual Offences Bill) to be passed. Zahra Siyad Naleye concluded that these issues are not something that concerns only women. All members of the society should take part in addressing them.

Discussing the role of parliament in passing laws intended to eradicate FGM and other forms of gender-based violence, Member of Parliament and Gender Activist **Sahra Omar Maalin** highlighted that Somalia's first dedicated legislation on gender-based violence, the Sexual Offences Bill, was brought to parliament in June 2018. She noted that the first reading of the bill must be conducted as a matter of urgency. The reading of the bill is the first priority in addressing sexual violence. She emphasized that Allah surely has honored women. There is a chapter of the Qur'an named after women, Nisa, but there is none named after men.

During **group discussion**, participants called for civil society to advocate for the endorsement of the Sexual Offences Bill (SOB). They also urged religious leaders to participate in advocacy and give speeches on the SOB in the mosques. The Ministry of Information and Culture should also contribute to awareness-raising for the enactment of the SOB. A chapter about the harm done to girls due to FGM should be added to Somalia's educational curriculum. Boys and men must be engaged and taught that rape is a great crime in terms of our religion and legislations.

Participants agreed that the lack of dedicated legislation poses a key barrier for women and girls in accessing justice. These challenges are compounded by stigma, cultural practices and the common tendency for the families of perpetrators and victims to address sexual violence through traditional negotiations between them.



Women can contribute to the development of our society with their innovative ideas.

Sahra Alasow

The role of religious scholars in fighting FGM and sexual violence is to educate people. We will not hesitate to do so.

Sh. Omar and Sh. Siyad

These issues are not something that concerns only women. All members of society should take part in addressing them.

Zahra Naleye, anti-FGM activist

The reading of the Sexual Offences Bill in parliament is the first priority in addressing sexual violence.

Sahra Omar Maalin, Member of Parliament and Gender Activist

Participants called for the law to supersede all traditional and cultural practices that harm women's rights. The Somali culture should stop supporting the offender and the perpetrator must face justice, including through strong prosecution. There is an urgent need to raise awareness among the community about the physical and psychological burdens experienced by women due to sexual violence and broader gender-based violence.

Delegates noted that, to ensure survivors can report offences, the privacy and safety of victims must be protected. There is a need for dedicated offices where cases can be reported and an emergency number for people to call during crisis.



Participants discuss shared demands for women's rights in breakout groups.



Civil society, religious leaders, government, women and men must join forces to lobby for the passing of the Sexual Offences Bill. The lack of dedicated legislation poses a key barrier in accessing justice.

The law must supersede all traditional and cultural practices that harm women's rights.

Outcome of group discussion

Summary of Key Themes of the Discussion:

- Somali's history of civil war has increased sexual and gender-based violence.
- FGM and sexual and gender-based violence are not in line with Islam.
- The lack of dedicated legislation poses a key barrier for survivors in accessing justice.
- Reading of the Sexual Offences Bill (SOB) in parliament is the first priority in addressing sexual and gender-based violence in Somalia.
- Civil society, religious leaders, government, women and men must join forces to lobby for the passing of the SOB.
- The law must supersede all traditional and cultural practices that harm women's rights.

CLOSING OF THE CONVENTION

Closing remarks by Halima Ismail, Chairperson of the National Elections Commission

This is the first time that a convention of this nature, bringing together such a large number of women, has been held in Somalia since the collapse of the Revolutionary Government. I would like to congratulate the Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Honorable Deqa Yasin, for this immense achievement. We must acknowledge the sacrifices of those women who have struggled and worked hard throughout their lives just to see a day like this, when Somali women from across all corners of the country come together to promote a single cause: the rights and interests of Somali women.

Let us not forget the advice of the First Lady in her opening speech: Women must work together and support one another as women. This convention was highly significant in that it not only gave all participants the opportunity to reflect on the past struggles of Somali women and the lessons that can be learned from their sacrifices, but also an opportunity to unite under the leadership of Minister Deqa Yasin and other champions of women's rights.

The Women's Charter sets out a plan of action that Somali women and other stakeholders agree on for the promotion of women's rights going forward.

In this context, the popular elections scheduled for 2020-21 and the formation of political parties, a process that transfers power from few key male players to ordinary Somali citizens as voters, provide Somali women with an immense opportunity. The role of political parties is key in this context and every party must give women at least 30 % of its top positions. As women, let us come together and pressure our politicians and elders to ensure the forthcoming elections are realized effectively and promote women's full participation. This is how we as women can secure our rights.



Halima Ismail, Chairperson of the National Elections Commission



The Women's Charter sets out a plan of action that Somali women and other stakeholders agree on for the promotion of women's rights going forward. In this context, the popular elections scheduled for 2020-21 provide Somali women with an immense opportunity.

Closing speech and presentation of the Somali Women's Charter by Deqa Yasin, Minister of Women and Human Rights Development

I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to both the Prime Minister and the First Lady for attending this convention. This shows their commitment, and that of the government, to women's cause. I would like to particularly thank the Prime Minister, whose constant support and encouragement during all of the Ministry's initiatives have been a critical engine driving my work for the Somali people during my time in this office. The commitment of both the President and Prime Minister to the promotion of women's rights is reflected in the composition and programmes of the current government.

The creation of this event, a convention that has brought together over 300 women and gender champions from all regions and member states of the country, as well as the diaspora, marked an important milestone for Somali women. Despite their diversity, the delegates were united by one agenda: the promotion of women's rights.

One of the issues that we discussed during this convention was the constitutional review process, currently underway, which the delegates saw as an important opportunity for the promotion of women's rights. In addition, the delegates also saw the electoral and political party laws, which are currently being drafted, as an important window of opportunity for Somali women. Regarding the constitution, the delegates called for the inclusion of clear, unambiguous statements defining the rights of women in the constitution.

Other key themes that were discussed included women's economic empowerment; the effects of climate change; women and innovation; women and justice and sexual and gender-based violence. The outcome of these discussions is the Somali Women's Charter. It is the key binding document that highlights the issues that women agreed during the convention. [The Minister then presented the key demands of the Somali Women's Charter, see pg. 5-8].

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Despite their diversity, the delegates of the Convention were united by one agenda: the promotion of women's rights.



Deqa Yasin Haji Yusuf, Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, standing sixth from left, with conference participants during the closing of the convention.

Closing remarks by Simon Bolongo, Deputy of AMISOM

I would like to use these brief closing remarks to congratulate the Minister for Women and Human Rights Development, Honorable Deqa Yasin, for convening this convention aimed to produce a Charter which defines the role of women in modern Somalia. Women have played integral roles in all societies around the world. Today researchers, academics and policy-makers recognize that progress is only possible with women and that governance without the full participation of women is therefore unimaginable.

It is based on this belief that the African Union is committed to quotas for women's participation in decision-making. In closing, I would like to assure the delegates of this convention that AMISOM and the African Union are wholeheartedly ready to support the Women's Charter and other initiatives led by the Minister for Women and Human Rights Development, Honorable Deqa Yasin.

Speech by Hassan Ali Khaire, Prime Minister, Federal Government of Somalia

I am very glad that I am here with you all today to witness the outcome of the Somali Women's Convention. This Convention has been long coming and I have been eagerly looking forward to it, from the moment Minister Deqa Yasin came to me with the idea to hold this Convention. I immediately supported the idea and urged the Minister to organize this Convention in the first three months of this year.

It is extremely positive to witness the hard work that you all have delivered in the past three days to reach this vital and tangible outcome. The Minister has been continuously updating me on the progress of the Convention and the work that was being conducted by the participants. I would like to fully acknowledge and commend the hard work of Minister Deqa and the staff of the Ministry in the great organization of this Convention.

Our Government has tremendous gratitude and respect for Somali women. We know the immense sacrifices you made to hold our nation together in the most difficult of times. You were the only caretakers of the Somali families and the only hope that our country had. You were the doctors that attended to our sick and injured. You have always pushed and continue to push for the peace process and advocated for hostilities to cease permanently. Many women here today have established civil society organizations to support the vulnerable and those that have become internally displaced. You have always been and continue to be the backbone of this nation.



Hassan Ali Khaire, Prime Minister, Federal Government of Somalia

Every single woman here today is a leader in her own right, from the home to all levels of society. Personally, I know my mother's efforts to make me the man I am today. She was my first teacher, she taught me how to talk and how to walk. There is no one that can take her position.

It is not necessary to keep repeating how important women are, we know and believe this intrinsically. As a government, we are committed to ensuring that women receive their fair share to be able to fully participate at all levels of our society. We can never deny the role of women in Somalia. If we conduct a census today, I am sure that women will be more than 55% of the Somali population. So we have to ensure that they receive their rights and fair share.

I have listened to the Minister, I have read the Charter and it is clear to me that this Charter is clearly defined and provides us with a clear mandate going forward. We will work together with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, which is one of the more active ministries in my administration, to fully implement this Charter. Also, I will share this Charter with the President and my Cabinet, as every office has a part to take in its implementation.

As you are all aware, the work on gender equality and human rights is a shared responsibility and therefore should be worked on by all ministries as these issues are truly cross-cutting. This is the reason why it is every ministry's job to work on the implementation of the Charter.

Parts of the Charter will have to be passed by parliament and I believe that many MPs are championing this cause, some of them are here today. They will ensure that this Charter is passed by parliament. Our work will be to fully implement the Charter.

Other parts of the Charter have to be sent to the institutions working on the constitutional review. In this context, I would like to encourage all women to take part in the constitutional review process. No one will speak up on your issues if you don't do it yourself, speak up and let your voices be heard. We will support you, but it is important for you all to appoint dedicated individuals to follow this process closely.

I would like to ask the Minister of Women and Human Rights and her ministry staff to come up with a comprehensive implementation action plan for the Charter to enable us to move forward on making the demands in the Charter a reality. This will also allow us to budget for this work.

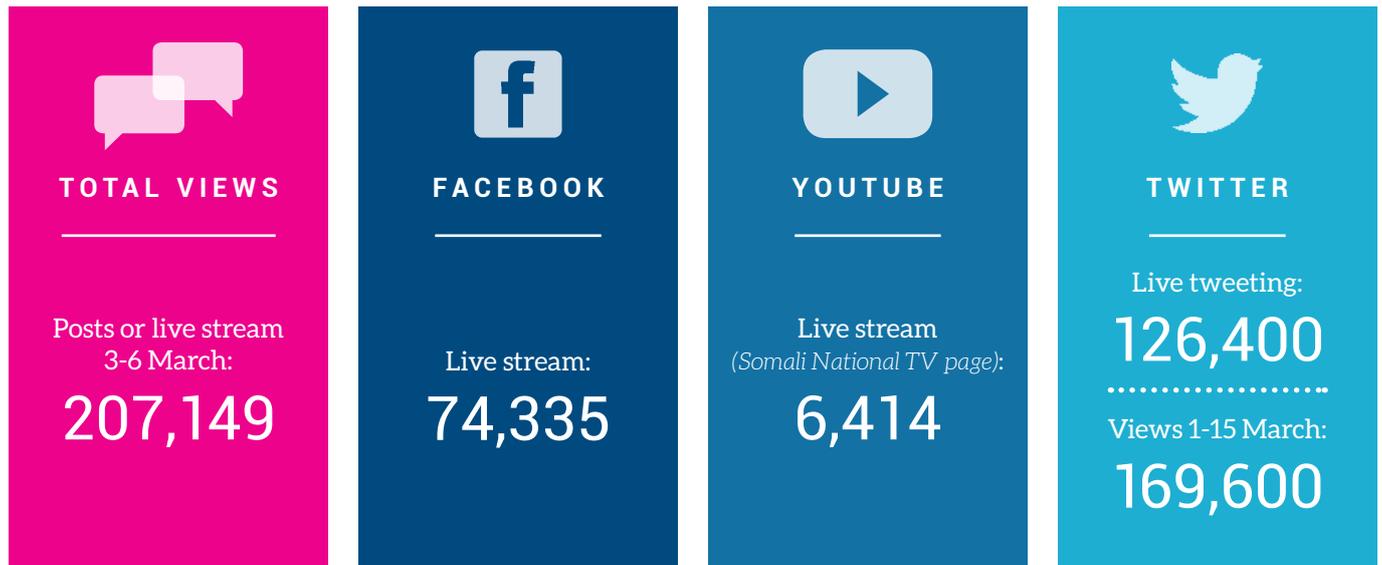
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The Somali Women's Charter provides us with a clear mandate going forward. We will work together with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development to fully implement this Charter.

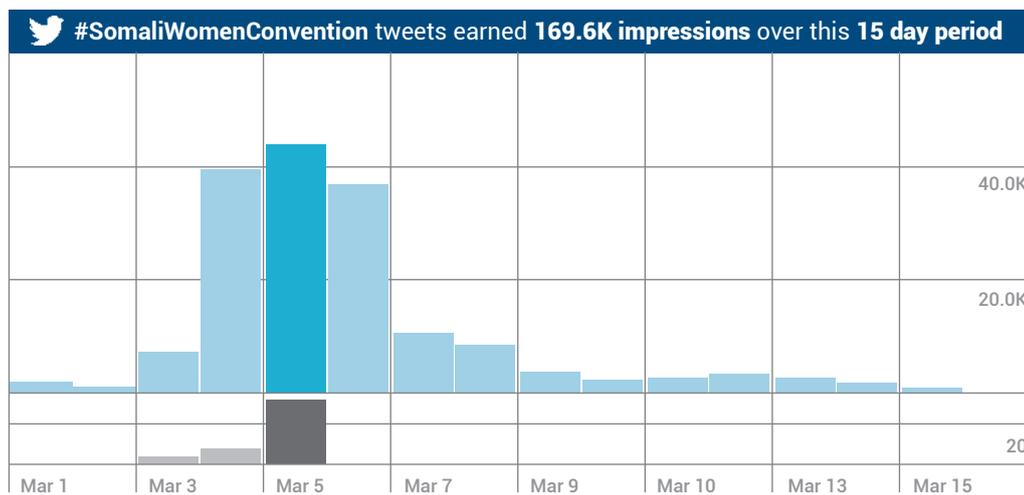
THE SOMALI WOMEN'S CONVENTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The Somali Women's Convention generated very high levels of interest and engagement on social media. Tweets about the conference were published through the hashtags **#SomaliWomenConvention** and **#ShirweynahaHaweenka**.

Social Media Audience Reach



Twitter Analytics Results



TWEETS PER DAY

#SomaliWomenConvention tweets earned **11,100** impressions per day during this 15 day period

TUESDAY MARCH 5, 2019

- Organic Impressions: **43,704**
- Tweets: **32**

ANNEX 1: AGENDA OF THE SOMALI WOMEN'S CONVENTION

SOMALI WOMEN'S CONVENTION

4 – 6 MARCH 2019

ROYAL PALACE HOTEL, MOGADISHU



DAY 1 – MONDAY 4 March 2019

8.00 – 9.00am	Registration	ALL		
09:00 – 10:30	Opening Remarks and Introduction to the Conference	<p>Sainab Abdi Moalim First Lady of Somalia</p> <hr/> <p>Deqa Yasin Minister of Gender and Human Rights Development</p> <hr/> <p>Khadija Mohamed Diriye Minister of Youth and Sports</p> <hr/> <p>Mahad Abdalla Awad Deputy Speaker of the House of the People</p> <hr/> <p>Gamal Hassan Minister of Planning, Investment & Economic Development</p> <hr/> <p>Eng. Abdirahman Yarisow Mayor of Mogadishu</p> <hr/> <p>Hawa Yusuf Ahmed Gender and Human Rights Committee Chairperson – House of the People</p> <hr/> <p>Zamzam Ibrahim Ali Gender and Human Rights Committee Chairperson – Upper House</p> <hr/> <p>Naima Mohamed Mohamud Minister of Health Galmudug</p> <hr/> <p>Caasha Khaliif Mohamed HirShabelle</p> <hr/> <p>Faiza Sharif Nur Minister of Women South-West Federal Member States</p> <hr/> <p>Peter de Clercq UNSOM – Officer in Charge and DSRSG</p> <hr/> <p>Ambassador Francisco Madeira Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC) for Somalia</p> <hr/> <p>Dignitaries & Friends of Somalia</p>		
		10:30 – 11:00	COFFEE BREAK	

11:00 - 12:00	Interactions with Media + Entertainment (Somali Band)	
12:00 – 13:30	PRAYER AND LUNCH	
13.30 – 14.30	Session 1 – The Draft Constitution reviewed through a Gender lens Panel Discussions The way forward for GEWE within the Constitution – lessons learned from 2016.	Panelists: Deputy Minister Hussein Abdi Elmi, Hibo Yassin Halima Jama
14.30 – 16.00	Break Out Groups Group 1: Overarching principles to be mainstreamed across the Constitution Group 2: The Bill of Rights	Facilitator: Abdisatar Mohamed Gelle Facilitator: Mohamed Elmi
15.00 – 15.30	PRAYERS AND COFFEE Free access during the breakup group discussions	
15.30 – 16.00	Plenary: Presentation from the groups + final feedback from key speakers and draft key points for women charter	Facilitator: Abdisatar Mohamed Gelle
16.00 – 16.30	Refreshment Press Q & A	Key speakers for press Q&A

DAY 2 – TUESDAY 5 MARCH 2019

08.00 – 09.00	Arrival and Spoken Word / Somali Poetry	All
09:00 – 10.15	Life Experience Session 2 – Women's Political Participation Panel Discussions	Hayat Omar Panelists Halima Ismail, Asha Gelle and Adam Matan Facilitator Nasrin Ibrahim
10.15 – 11.30	Break out groups Group1: Political participation and its law Group 2: Elections	Facilitator Nimco Hassan Facilitator Nasrin Ibrahim
11.30 – 12.00	Session 2 – Plenary Session Identify point(s) for women charter	Plenary Session Facilitator Nimco Hassan and Nasrin Ibrahim
12:00 – 13:00	PRAYER AND LUNCH	
13.00 – 14.00	Session 3 – Women Economic Participation as a key element in achieving the NDP. Panel Discussions	Panelists Gamal Hassan, Qadijo Cali Nasra Wehliye Deeq Yusuf

14.00 – 15.00	Group work Women economic participation as a key element in achieving the NDP	Facilitator Sahra Ahmed Koshin
15.00 – 15.30	Plenary session covering both sessions	Facilitator Sahra Ahmed Koshin
13.00 – 14.00	Session 4 – Women, Climate Change and Resilience Panel discussion	Panelists Prof. Abdullahi Elmi Asad Amaal Said Jamac Zahra Abukar Ismail Asli Ducaale
14.00 – 15.00	Group work Women, climate change and resilience	Facilitator Cumar Faaruuq
15.00 – 15:30	Plenary session covering both sessions	
15:30 – 16:30	Refreshments and Press Q & A	
18.30 – 20.30	Dinner hosted by the Governor of Banaadir Regional Administration & Mayor of Mogadishu	For participants of Convention

DAY 3 – WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 2019

08:00 – 09:00	Registration	All
09:00 – 9:30	Presentation of previous' day outcomes and Introduction of today's Programme	Inclusive participation
9.30 – 10.30 (refreshments)	Session 5 – Justice for Women and Girls Panel discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender based violence • Transitional justice and a justice system that works for all: from gender sensitive legislations to effective institutions Women and transitional justice 	Panelists Axmed Cali Dahir Tahlilil Haji Sahra Mohamed Ahmed
11.30 – 12:00	Breakout groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1: Gender based violence • Group 2: Transitional justice and a justice system that works for all: from gender sensitive legislations to effective institutions 	Facilitator Sadia Mohamed Nur Facilitator Suheyba Badqas
12.00 – 12.30	Presentation in plenary Identification of key issues for inclusion in the women charter	Facilitator Suheyba Badqas & Sadia Mohamed Nur
12:30 – 13:30	PRAYER AND LUNCH	
13.30 – 14.15	Session 6: Innovation and Women Pioneers Panel discussions	Panelists Iman Ahmed Sumaya Nur Abdi Sadiyo Siad Sahra Alasow

14.15- 15.15 (coffee)	Group Session (followed by plenary) Suggested interventions to amplify women's empowerment and contributions to peace and sustainable developments	Facilitator Nasrin Ibrahim
13.30 – 14.15	Session 7: Advocacy around the passing and implementation of SOB and anti-FGM bills – best practices Panel discussions	Panelists Zahra Siyad Naleyeh Sheikh Cumar Xerow Sahra Omar Maalin Sheikh Hassan Sheikh Ahmed Siyaar
14.15 – 15.15 (coffee)	Group Session (followed by final plenary session) Draft plan of action to support passing and implementation of SOB and anti-FGM bills	Facilitator Nasrin Ibrahim
15:15 – 15:20	Women's importance in the security of Somalia	Speaker Amb. Francisco Madeira
15:20 – 15:25	Sweden supporting Somali Women's Advancement	Speaker Amb. Andreas von Uexkull
15:25 – 15:40	The impact of the Convention in relation to 2020 elections	Ms. Halima Ismail
15:40 – 15:55	Presentation of the Women's Charter	Minister Deqa Yasin
15.55 – 16.25	Closing Ceremony Signing and handover of Women Charter	Prime Minister of Somalia Hassan Ali Khaire
16.25 – 17:10	Refreshments and Group Photo	
17.10 – 17.40	Press Q & A	

The Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development
of the Federal Republic of Somalia
would like to thank its partners for the support
in implementing the event.



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*



