



Working to prevent
violent conflict

Saferworld briefing

South Central Non-State Actors consultation on Somalia post-August 2012 arrangements

With recommendations for discussion at 2012 London conference on Somalia

January 2012

This document provides a summary of responses to the SOSSENSA-run consultation in late December 2011 in Mogadishu, on arrangements for Somalia post-August 2012. It also provides some of Saferworld's analysis of what these consultation responses might mean for the London conference on Somalia.

Political arrangements

In discussing the implementation of the roadmap in the run up to August, participants identified security provision as their top priority, followed by reconciliation, the constitution making process and good governance.¹ Despite this ordering of priorities, it was also noted that reconciliation is an important prerequisite to sustainable security.² In other words, reconciliation should be seen as one of several important mechanisms for achieving security, not as an alternative or lower priority goal.

Participants felt that the reconciliation process should be led not by the international community but by Somalis themselves and that it should not be restricted to power-sharing arrangements at the highest levels, but should start at the village, district and regional level where on-going grievances need to be addressed.³ Addressing political, power and resource sharing were felt to be key to the process of reconciliation.⁴

Responses on the constitution-making process focused on the need for much more extensive

consultations on the draft document, ensuring that it is suited to the Somali context, and deciding how it should be approved: by a constituent assembly or a popular referendum. Participants felt there had been insufficient opportunities for non-state actors to meaningfully participate in the process.⁵

Participants also felt that the best way of selecting parliamentarians was through free and fair elections. However, they made suggestions on means of selecting candidates in the event that elections are not possible. These included selection based on regions, determining number of seats by a region's population, and drawing members from community elders and religious scholars.⁶ A number of criteria were suggested for eligibility to stand for Parliament. These focused on the need for representatives to be well-educated, untainted by past associations or perceived misconduct, and respected within the community that they represent.⁷

While a range of views were expressed on use of the 4.5 formula, the majority position of SOSSENSA is that the 4.5 formula is "based on injustice and against the unity and successful reconciliation of the Somali people."⁸

Discussions on regional administrations and how they can be encouraged to provide services identified training needs in the area of financial management, as well as a requirement for

¹ SOSSENSA, Non-State Actors Consultative Meeting on Somalia's Current Political Issues (2011), p 1.

² Ibid, p 6.

³ Ibid, p 2.

⁴ Ibid, p 3.

⁵ Ibid, p 2.

⁶ Ibid, p 3.

⁷ Ibid, p 3.

⁸ SOSSENSA, Press Release on SOSSENSA's Position on the Garowe Meeting, 1st January 2012.

international support to improve livelihoods and other social sectors.⁹

There was a strong feeling that the relationship between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and regional administrations should be based on mutual accountability, but also that both must be made accountable to the people they serve.¹⁰

Local stability

Participants felt that regional administrations bring significant benefits, including filling the administrative vacuum necessary for providing services, encouraging positive interaction among communities that respect the rights of the marginalised and minorities, and creating an environment of constructive competition to support the rebuilding of infrastructure and generation of economic resources.¹¹

However, the role of these regional administrations also highlights the contentious nature of the federalism debate.¹² Participants felt that regional administrations should recognize that they are part of the central government and not separate entities, while at the same time feeling that the government should recognize the legitimate regional administrations (those formed according to the Charter) and share resources with them.

It was felt that regional administrations were able to provide a level of security in their communities, but despite willingness to do so, did not have the capacity to provide other services. Many participants suggested capacity should be increased in a number of areas, including on policing, resource generation and management, demographic issues, IDPs and resettlement problems and connecting and collaborating with central authorities.

Participants felt that communities themselves could do a great deal to improve local stability, if they were mobilised and supported to fulfil this role. It was also noted that reconciliation at the local level and the support of a strong and independent justice system are necessary to build sustainable stability.

Security threats

Participants identified a number of key threats to security, as well as possible solutions, including:

⁹ *Op cit*, SOSSENSA, p 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p 4.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p 5.

¹² Despite the fact that 42% of participants came from outside Mogadishu, it is important to note had the consultation been dominated by people from the regions this may have brought out a different viewpoint.

reducing conflict between government officials through constitutional and reconciliation processes, strengthening governmental structures and systems and building trust between communities and the government, establishing an independent anti-corruption unit, consistently paying government employees including those of the armed forces, and creating employment opportunities for young people.

Despite general lack of faith in the government, participants believed that people would be more likely to support the government should it continue to make security gains. This highlights the fact that progress on security would go a long way to increasing the perceived legitimacy of the government.

Concern was also expressed that should the TFG defeat its opponents, clan conflicts over territory could erupt and warlords could also re-group. It was noted that further conflict was possible if individuals who have so far benefited from power-sharing deals felt that this was threatened by territorial gains made by the TFG.¹³

This last point highlights the need to understand the multi-faceted nature of Somalia's conflicts and prioritise reconciliation alongside attempts to achieve security. Stability will not necessarily be achieved if *Al Shabaab* is defeated; there are other factors that influence and fuel conflict which need to be appreciated and addressed at once.

Armed groups

Participants believed that there is support for armed groups from among business people, religious groups and through social/familial ties. They recommended that groups or individuals found to be supporting non-state armed groups should be dealt with through a criminal justice system that needs to be developed, but also that if the government was able to provide security, this would help to reduce support for armed groups.¹⁴

Piracy

Participants responded that piracy represents a threat to security, which should be tackled by improving the capacity of the government to control its maritime borders. They felt that training and further equipping Somali marine forces, as well as the consistent payment of salaries, would help meet this objective.¹⁵

It is worth noting that during past Saferworld-supported NSA consultation meetings in South

¹³ *Ibid*, p 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p 7.

Central, conclusions have been drawn on the need to tackle the root causes of piracy, often on land. The suggested measures included enhancing the living conditions of coastal communities and rural villagers through provision of social services and basic infrastructure, involving civil society groups in counter-piracy initiatives and international involvement in curtailing illegal fishing and the dumping of toxic waste off Somalia's coast.¹⁶

Management of national assets/anti-corruption

The main area of discussion around the management of national assets and anti-corruption was the need for functioning mechanisms and systems for revenue collection and expenditure and the hiring of qualified personnel. Participants recommended that this be complemented by the regular and consistent payment of salaries of government staff and security personnel.¹⁷

Importantly, participants reported that they had little information on government expenditure or of the budget allocations for different ministries and projects.¹⁸ This perceived lack of transparency is both a cause and a consequence of the lack of trust between government bodies and between the government and the people.

In order to build local capacity, maintain ownership and keep the international community in a support/facilitation role, participants suggested that major sources of TFG revenue such as aid, the port and the airport should be channelled through national institutions.¹⁹ In order to combat corruption, they noted the need for an independent and effective anti-corruption unit, as well as a strong and independent judiciary and acceptance of the rule of law.²⁰

Role of the International Community

Participants highlighted the need for a single, strong, accountable body for co-ordinating international assistance, which would liaise with non-state actors and have an office in Mogadishu.²¹ They also felt that international donors should have bases inside Somalia, arguing that "as long as they are far from us they will not

understand our problems."²² In addition it was noted that humanitarian assistance is perceived as susceptible to political agendas.²³

Participants also suggested that non-state actors should be supported to carry out monitoring and evaluation of the use of donor funds to further accountability.²⁴ They also believed that international donors should do more to involve Somali non-state actors in decision-making around national politics, security, the economy, reconciliation and reconstruction, as well as on project planning and implementation.²⁵

In addition to a facilitation and technical support role, participants suggested that the international community also has a role to play in taking action against those within or outside government who jeopardise the political process or national stability.²⁶ Lastly, participants raised the issue of national reconstruction in post-conflict Somalia, and asked, 'what next'?²⁷

Implications for London Conference

The consultation provides many useful responses to questions HMG and other international actors will be thinking through ahead of and at the London Conference on Somalia, and Saferworld believes the exercise should be useful in helping to inform these discussions. We believe the consultation highlights three key issues for the London Conference:

1. Participation of Somali stakeholders in the political process

SOSSENSA's consultation highlighted a diversity of opinions on many of the details of the political process as well as a feeling of not having been able to meaningfully engage in the current process. This highlights the need to ensure that the political process after August 2012 is not only informed by the perspectives of a broad range of Somali stakeholders but also one which their active participation helps to create a sense of ownership and investment in.

In order to ensure that Somali stakeholders' participation is felt to be 'meaningful', it may be important to think about the foundations effective participation requires. For instance, ensuring timeframes are realistic for the daily realities of Somalia, or pursuing an iterative approach that

¹⁶ Saferworld briefing: Piracy in the Gulf of Aden: tackling the root causes, July 2011

¹⁷ Ibid, p 8.

¹⁸ Ibid, p 8.

¹⁹ Ibid, p 9.

²⁰ Ibid, p 8.

²¹ Ibid, p 9.

²² Minutes of SOSSENSA consultation meeting.

²³ Ibid, p 10.

²⁴ Ibid, p 11.

²⁵ Ibid, p 11.

²⁶ Ibid, p 10.

²⁷ Ibid, p 11.

allows Somali stakeholders to see how their input has shaped the development of the political process and understand why and how to engage with the process on an on-going basis.

The London conference could usefully look at – and make a statement on – how the international community and national government of Somalia will ensure that a broad range of Somali stakeholders are able to meaningfully participate in the design of any arrangements that will follow the transitional arrangements from August 2012. (For instance, on the composition and functions of any proposed representative assembly). It could also spell out provisions designed to ensure that any formal consultative periods within the future political process provide for the meaningful participation of a range of Somali stakeholders.

2. Promoting local stability

The SOSCENSA consultation highlights a view that local stability in Somalia is a stepping stone towards broader security and that such security is the essential prerequisite for progress in most other areas. Reconciliation is seen as a key ingredient in achieving such stability and security.

In outlining an international approach to promoting local stability, Saferworld suggests the London Conference consider the following principles:

- understanding what security means to Somali actors;
- understanding the legitimacy of regional administrations based on consultations with the community;
- understanding the viability of the particular regional administrations in the Somali context;
- understanding what the regional administrations aspire to be; service providers, providers of security, political entities etc;
- being informed by an understanding of what works in the Somali context and why it works;
- taking an approach to engagement that is cognisant of the fact that international involvement changes the dynamics of what works and why it works;
- seeing reconciliation as a core part of promoting stability; and
- understanding the need for reconciliation to look beyond armed groups and political entities to encompass reconciliation between social groups.

3. Mutual accountability

Saferworld understands that the London Conference will look at ways of improving mutual accountability between the TFG and donors in Somalia and this is to be welcomed. But it will be

equally important to remember that accountability is not restricted to that between the TFG (and whatever replaces it) and donors, but also includes ‘downwards accountability’ of donors, international organisations and the national government to broader Somali society.

The SOSCENSA consultation clearly demonstrates the desire by non-state actors to play a role in providing oversight and scrutiny of how funds are used (through budget monitoring for example), something which may contribute to rebuilding much needed trust between Somalia’s institutions, international partners and broader Somali society.

The London Conference should therefore consider how any proposed initiative to improve mutual accountability between the national government and donors or to provide oversight of revenue and financial management could bring in Somali civil society.

Details of the consultation

On 19th – 20th December 2011, SOSCENSA held a two day consultation meeting on arrangements for Somalia post August 2012. The questions that were discussed were formulated by Saferworld and DfID and shared with the platform in advance. On 27th December the outcomes of the two day consultation were discussed by the Board of Directors of SOSCENSA and final positions were elaborated.

The two day consultation invited the contributions of 52 members of SOSCENSA and other civil society representatives. Of the 52 participants, 16 were women, and 22 of the 52 were from regions outside Mogadishu.

About Saferworld

Saferworld is an independent international NGO that works to prevent violent conflict and promote co-operative approaches to security. We believe everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives free from insecurity and armed violence.

We always seek to work constructively with others and do not usually engage in public campaigning. While we are not a traditional development agency, we seek to understand and influence the relationship between conflict, security and international development.

We have over 60 staff based in London and abroad – with registered offices in Brussels, Juba, Kampala, Nairobi and Pristina – and a permanent staff presence in most of the countries we work in. Our funding for 2008-2009 was around £4.7million – mainly in the form of government grants from Canada, the EU, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK.

Saferworld – 28 Charles Square, London N1 6HT, UK
Registered Charity no 1043843
Company limited by guarantee no 3015948
Tel: +44 (0)20 7324 4646 | *Fax:* +44 (0)20 7324 4647
Email: general@saferworld.org.uk
Web: www.saferworld.org.uk