

Real progress has been made in Somalia, but failure to address conflict drivers at all levels risks undermining further progress

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Saferworld and World Vision join their voices with the international community in recognising the real progress that has been made in promoting peace and stability in Somalia under the New Deal. A focus on inclusivity of all Somalis, including women, refugees and IDPs, is particularly welcome. But there are concerns that the Somali government and international donors continue to sidestep the difficult but important work of identifying drivers of conflict, which is fundamental to achieving long term change.

On 19 and 20 November 2014, the Federal Government of Somalia and representatives from 56 delegations met in Copenhagen at the High Level Partnership Forum (HLPF) to review progress and set new milestones in implementing the Somali New Deal Compact one year after its endorsement. The President of Somalia opened the forum stating “We all share the same mutual goals of peace and security” and the international community recommitted its support to the success of the New Deal and their desire to realize a peaceful and stable Somalia.

International delegates at the HLPF raised several important issues which have been missing from the dialogue since the Compact’s endorsement such as the need to include women in all aspects of the New Deal and a recognition that displaced Somalis, totaling a quarter of the population, need to be taken into account when designing and delivering programs. It was however repeatedly noted that while gains have been made, the pace of implementation of the Compact is too slow, especially in regard to achieving Vision 2016 and its key objectives of federalism, constitutional review and elections. Saferworld, World Vision and many international and national stakeholders hold a different view, that the endorsement of the Compact and subsequent actions have been rushed, skipping important steps such as civil society consultations and fragility assessments. It has been widely acknowledged that the key drivers of conflict have not yet been identified via a fragility assessment, but this critical element of the process was scarcely mentioned throughout the HLPF. The fragility assessment, the first element of the New Deal’s FOCUS principles, sets out to identify a common basis of understanding of the diverse range of conflict- and peace- drivers across the country. Without a framework which identifies an agreed set of drivers of fragility, there is a risk that the New Deal could cause more harm than good by contributing to current conflict drivers in the country. As the international community challenges the government to increase its momentum and deliver results, there is concern that the common understanding and agreement of the key causes of conflict in the Compact will not be addressed.

It was, however, encouraging that both the government and international actors recognised the need for the New Deal process to be more inclusive. Without an inclusive process, which is truly reflective of all Somali people, trust will erode and the success of the Compact could be jeopardized. Civil society and international actors have raised concerns that the New Deal does not reach beyond Mogadishu to the regional and district administrations, nor to the wider Somali population. From recent steps taken by the

government and the international community, as well as by commitments made during the HLPF, there are signs that the New Deal process will become more inclusive in both the recognition of, and active role of, civil society and the district administrations in all parts of the process. The Somali President stated in his opening remarks, "I will include women and minority groups in nation building" and the UN reinforced that "inclusivity is absolutely key". Also encouraging was that HLPF participants included district administration representatives, two INGOs participating as observers, and representatives of Somali civil society. Additionally, it was noted in several statements that many efforts have been made within the PSGs to include both administrations and civil society in meetings.

The current political situation in Somalia cast a shadow over the forum. The international community repeatedly mentioned the current crisis asking for a quick resolution in order to regain their confidence. One delegate conveyed a message from his country's Somali diaspora "expressing concern for a collaborative and unified political leadership". The communique "recognizes the need to restore political stability and regain momentum of deliver quickly."

The international community has renewed its support towards a successful New Deal, however the onus lies with the government to honour its commitments and take the necessary steps to put words in to action. International civil society should be ready to support such steps if the commitments made in Copenhagen are honoured and there is a recognition that more needs to be done to address the weaknesses in the New Deal processes and structures. Without identifying the key drivers of conflict as well as engaging a wide range of Somalis in the process, the New Deal will not see its full potential in being a framework for realizing a peaceful and stable Somalia.

Detailed recommendations and community and civil society perspectives on the Compact can be found in Saferworld and World Vision's report at; <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/858-strengthening-the-new-deal-from-the-bottom-up-perspectives-on-the-somali-compact-and-somaliland-special-arrangement>.