



**Serving the people  
of Somalia**

### HIGHLIGHTS

- AU, EU, IGAD and UN hold consultations on 2020
- Floods in Belet Weyne
- Support and praise at close of Mogadishu Tech Summit
- Desert locust ravages the Horn of Africa
- Somalia's progress and challenges with women in peace and security

## AU, EU, IGAD AND UN HOLD CONSULTATIONS IN FEDERAL MEMBER STATES AHEAD OF 2020

**This past December saw top representatives of the African Union (AU), European Union (EU), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and United Nations conduct a series of meetings in Federal Member States to hear from various stakeholders about a number of key processes affecting the country.**

Their visits to the cities of Baidoa, Jowhar, Kismayo and Garowe came in the lead-up to 2020 – a critical year for Somalia. Their aim was to consult with a range of stakeholders in each of the Federal Member States visited on how key national priorities can be achieved in 2020. These include preparations for 'one-person, one-vote' elections, the finalisation of the Federal Constitution, continued progress towards debt relief, and the fight against Al-Shabaab.

"These goals are achievable with the strong collaboration of all stakeholders and has the potential to be a historic year for Somalia. We encourage all Somali leaders, institutions and communities to engage in dialogue to agree a way forward, and to cooperate to realise the priorities agreed for 2020," the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, James Swan, said on behalf of the delegation on one of its stops. He echoed this view in comments throughout the visits.

In addition to the UN envoy, the other representatives were the European Union's Ambassador to Somalia, Nicolas Berlanga; a Senior Advisor of IGAD, Jamal Ahmed Ibrahim; and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Ambassador Francisco Madeira, and his deputy, Simon Mulongo.

In the various encounters, the delegation also emphasized that it looks forward to supporting Somalia to fulfil the national priorities it has committed to in 2020.



UN Photo / Calisto Lemashon





UN Photo / Calisto Tanashon



UN Photo / Carlos Gomez del Campo



UN Photo / Carlos Gomez del Campo



UN Photo / Carlos Gomez del Campo



UN Photo / Mohamednor Abdikadir Abdissalam



UN Photo / Carlos Gomez del Campo



UN Photo / Omar Abdissalam



UN Photo / Mohamednor Abdikadir Abdissalam





UN Photo/Omar Abdisalan

## AS FLOODS RECEDE AROUND BELET WEYNE, NEED FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED EVENTS HIGHLIGHTED

**With flood-waters receding around Belet Weyne, residents are trying to return to normal life – but it is no easy task.**

“Our situation is dire: our livelihoods have been destroyed, our children need support, our food supplies are meagre,” said a mother of nine, Maryan Mohamed Jimale. “Getting food is a problem. This is as a result of the raging floods that hit our homes.”

The local resident was speaking in December at a camp for internally displaced persons at Ceel-Jaale, located about five kilometres from Belet Weyne town. She and her family are among many taking shelter and receiving aid at the camp, run by local non-governmental organisations with the support of United Nations humanitarian agencies and the Federal Government of Somalia.

**We need a project that will address the problem of flooding once and for all**

Mrs. Jimale’s plight was echoed by the Governor of Hiraa region, which encompasses Belet Weyne. Ali Muhumad Arale called for more help to enable affected communities put in place long-term solutions to address the growing frequency of climate-related hazards such as the recent flooding.

“We need durable solutions for a water flow protection project; we need that water to be redirected away from us – we need a project that will address the problem of flooding once and for all,” Governor Ali said.

The Belet Weyne area experienced severe flooding in late October, when the Shabelle River burst its banks due to heavy rains.

The situation left some 570,000 people flood-affected and, of these, more than 350,000 people have so far received assistance. The flood waters receded, allowing 80,000 displaced people in Belet Weyne town – around 40 per cent of 240,000 displaced town residents – to return home.

However, many of those who have been able to return to their residences are coping

with the effects of the flooding, including washed-away homes, roads and bridges. In addition, the rains have inundated 207,000 hectares of land along the nearby Shabelle and Juba rivers, raising concerns about food security and livelihood losses.

According to Governor Ali, immediate needs to address include the provision of emergency clean water, food aid and relocating the region’s airport.

“The other important issue is the damaged roads, which were destroyed by the



UN Photo/Abdikarim Mohamed



floods,” the governor added. “The town has no roads; they were totally destroyed. The roads linking the farms have been destroyed, including the bridges, and we need to have them restored.”

### **Increasing vulnerability**

On a visit to affected areas this past weekend, a UN official noted that Somalia is increasingly vulnerable to climate change, with climate-related events – mainly drought and flooding – having increased in frequency and intensity throughout the country, exacerbating humanitarian needs and undermining community resilience.

“These rapid shifts between droughts and floods indicate just how sensitive Somalia is to this sort of issue,” UN spokesperson Ari Gaitanis said. “At the same time you must keep in mind the fact that these communities are already on the edge in terms of decades of poverty and conflict, so having something like this can easily push them over the edge, going from an already bad situation to a much worse situation.”

Since 1990, Somalia has experienced 30 climate-related hazards; 12 droughts and 18 floods – tripling the number of climate-related hazards experienced between 1970 and 1990.

In 2017, a severe drought left Somalia on the verge of famine. In 2019, a delayed and erratic 2019 Gu’ rainy season resulted in

the poorest harvest since the 2011 famine and flooding.

### **\$47.5 million needed**

On 23 November, the United Nations and the Somali authorities launched a three-month \$72.5 million Flood Response Plan to mobilise additional resources. Around a third of that has been made available, but \$47.5 million is still required.

The United Nations is working closely with local authorities and partners to determine and meet the most urgent needs of Somalis affected by the flooding. The world body is dispatching emergency supplies and providing life-saving services through partners on the ground.

In addition, with the floods having receded and the situation entering the recovery phase, UN agencies are also helping to identify and support local residents with issues such as malnutrition, as well as risks posed by the outbreak of diseases such as acute water diarrhea and cholera, as well as malnutrition. For example, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has distributed 61,000 hygiene kits to improve access to safe water and prevent waterborne

diseases – the kits have gone to 61,000 households, reaching around 366,000 people – as well as dispatched supplies to treat people for acute watery diarrhea.

Mr. Gaitanis said the climate-related shocks also highlight the importance of supporting the Federal Government’s recovery and resilience framework which is central to efforts to break the cycle of recurring humanitarian crises in the country.

“In addition to pushing for lifesaving help for people in this region and other parts as well, we (the United Nations) are also looking to help get more support for

long-term, durable solutions to help Somalia avoid this sort of problem in future as well,” the UN official said, noting that such solutions can help stimulate long-term development and address the underlying causes of Somalia’s crises.

To achieve this, the UN and its partners are working to ensure that emergency and development assistance complement each other, in line with the Federal Government’s National Development Plan to achieve long-term recovery and resilience.

UN agencies are also helping to identify and support local residents with issues such as malnutrition



**“Our situation is dire**

*our children need support”*

# PLEDGES OF SUPPORT AND WORDS OF PRAISE AT CLOSE OF MOGADISHU TECH SUMMIT

**The Mogadishu Tech Summit was held in the Somali capital in November and closed with words of praise and encouragement from the government and the United Nations, and pledges worth millions of dollars in support of technological advancement in Somalia.**

“Somalia has, as you all know, economic, security and environmental challenges. Utilizing the strength of our youth towards the discovery of innovative solutions in science and technology is our best chance to overcome those challenges,” Somalia’s Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, Jamal Hassan, said in his remarks to the close of the three-day gathering.

The Minister urged more support for technological advancement and innova-

tion. It was a view shared by other speakers, which included the European Union Ambassador to Somalia, Nicolas Berlanga Martines; the UN Development Programme’s (UNDP) Resident Coordinator for Somalia, Jocelyn Mason; the Swedish Ambassador to Somalia, Staffan Tillander; and the US Embassy’s Deputy Chief of Mission, Brian Neubert.

More than 5000 people attended this year’s Mogadishu Technology Summit. The annual event was the second of its kind and once again brought together Somalis involved in the tech industry and representatives from the government, UN agencies, international partners, investors and financial institutions – some of which pledged millions of dollars in support.

This year, Salaam Bank pledged \$5 million for the next three years to be made available to innovators and entrepreneurs, with access to the funds provided through iRise, Somalia’s first-ever technology innovation hub which promotes collaboration between innovators and investors, while also offering resources needed by budding entrepreneurs and startups, such as business training, mentorship, project evaluation and support during the incubation stages of their projects. Last year, Premier Bank injected \$1 million into the tech summit, with close to a quarter of that amount already disbursed to emerging innovators and entrepreneurs.

“The main reason why we organized Mogadishu Tech Summit is to bring together innovators, entrepreneurs, social activists and youth around Somalia and also from the diaspora so that they can share their experiences and share how they can actually solve the



problems that Somalia is facing through entrepreneurship and social innovations,” said Awil Osman, the Chief Executive Officer of iRise, which organizes the Mogadishu Tech Summit.

## Link to SDGs

In his remarks to the event, UNDP’s Mr. Mason referred to its links to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“The summit is an excellent opportunity for Somalia, Somalia’s people and especially young people to discuss the future of their country and explore new ways to overcome issues like climate change, water scarcity and ultimately achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through innovation and technology,” he said.

Avis Mulhall, from UNDP’s Somalia Accelerator Lab – one of 60 serving 78 countries by working with national and global partners to find new approaches that fit the complexity of current development challenges – said that Somalia has a bright future thanks to the passions of its innovators.





"There is an entire ecosystem within the NGO space, within the private sector, within the finance sector that wants to see a thriving tech community here in Somalia and particularly Mogadishu. So we are really excited that UNDP is here supporting youth and driving this agenda of technology and innovation forward," Ms. Mulhall said.

### **Innovations presented**

Some 40 young innovators exhibited their various technological inventions. A highlight among them was a blood bank mobile App called Hibeeye, which means 'donor' in the Somali language.

Abdullahi Alas and his friends were inspired to develop the app after the lethal bomb attack in Mogadishu on 14 October 2017, which killed at least 587 people and ranks as the deadliest ever terrorist bombing in Africa involving the use of improvised explosive devices. Hundreds more were injured in the blast.

"It was clear then that people did not have access to safe blood transfusion, or a blood bank. So we came up with this idea to create something that connects people who want to donate blood to people who are actually in need," Mr. Alas explained, adding that the app is already in use in Mogadishu.

However, an all-girl team that manufactures beauty products emerged as the winners for the award of the gathering's best innovation. Their start-up, Sadra Beauty Company, uses locally available raw materials to manufacture lotion, hair and body oil, as well as lip balm.

"We manufacture various lotions. We have one made from a mixture of avocado and cactus and one made from carrots. We also produce lip balm from natural products, which can be used by both men and women," said the company's co-founder, Ifra Isse Mohamed.



UN Photo/Ilyas Ahmed



Wikimedia Commons/Christiaan Kooyman

## **FUNDING NEEDED FOR SOMALIA'S FIGHT AGAINST DESERT LOCUST**

**Somalia is facing its worst desert locust outbreak in more than 25 years, according to the United Nations food agency, with the pest breeding heavily across the country's north and an estimated 70,000 hectares of land already infested by hoppers and breeding adults.**

"We are talking about a medium- to long-term intervention. The impact of our actions in the short-term is going to be very limited, but we can make a difference to support livelihoods and avoid further disastrous consequences for the next Gu season in 2020 if we act now," the Representative of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Somalia, Etienne Peterschmitt, said in December.

"FAO requires an additional \$3 million for this initial response," he added.

Over the next six months, more than 100,000 hectares of land will require direct control intervention in Somalia.

FAO has highlighted that the Desert Locust outbreak calls for immediate institutional, infrastructural and technical investments for larger scale actions from next year onwards. With funding from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the UN agency is already working closely with Ministries of Agriculture and partner organizations on surveillance and control efforts in Somaliland and Puntland to prevent the spread of desert locust to southern and central Somalia.

FAO has also facilitated surveys covering over 20,000 hectares in Puntland and Somaliland. Some 20 Ministry of Agricultural Development staff have been trained on the application of biopesticide in Somaliland, where spray operations have just started to control breeding.

"Given the scale of the disaster, aerial spray using airplanes would have been the ideal control measure. However, security conditions in most parts of Somalia do not allow it," Mr. Peterschmitt noted.

So far, the locust infestations have been confined to rangeland and grasslands areas in Somaliland and Puntland. However, once adults form immature swarms, there is a greater possibility that some swarms will migrate south towards the Ethiopian border area with southern Somalia – towards the Federal Member States of Jubaland, South West State and Hirshabelle – while other swarms will remain in place, mature and lay eggs for another generation of breeding.

The situation is far worse than anticipated and it has been exacerbated by exceptionally high rainfall and Cyclone Pawan. If left unattended, it is expected that the desert locust will likely spread to the main crop growing areas in southern Somalia, as well as north-eastern Kenya, Eritrea and Djibouti.

The desert locust is a transboundary pest with the ability to spread over large areas causing considerable damage to pasture and crops. Outbreaks occur periodically but are complex to predict, according to FAO, and, when not managed at the place of origin or breeding ground, they can lead to loss of up to 100 per cent of food and fodder crops.



## HIGH-LEVEL UN-AU DELEGATION HIGHLIGHTS SOMALIA'S CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS WITH WOMEN IN PEACE AND SECURITY

**On a visit to the Somali capital in October, a high-level delegation of United Nations and African Union officials welcomed the Horn of Africa country's achievements in women's participation in its peace, security and development efforts – while also calling for further progress.**

**A**fter decades of conflict and amidst the ongoing violence the people of Somalia still faces, the country has made enormous strides on its path to peace and stability. In our short visit here, we have heard from government officials and civil society leaders how Somali women taking part in peace and security efforts has helped advance society towards an inclusive and peaceful future. This is the future the people of Somalia rightly deserve and which the United Nations and African Union fully support," said the UN delegation's head, the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed.

"However, much more remains to be done, especially to ensure gender equality, including women's full participation in the 'one person, one vote' federal elections next year. We welcome recent gains, especially in the areas of human rights,

civic and political participation, access to justice and basic services," the Deputy Secretary-General added.

Ms. Mohammed was joined by the African Union (AU) Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop, and the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga. The aim of the one-day visit was to express the UN and AU's commitment to work with the Somali people in their pursuit of peace, stability and credible elections.

The delegation underscored the importance of women's meaningful participation in political, peace and security efforts, particularly in relation to countering violent extremism, holding elections and advancing development efforts. The delegation also expressed its strong support to the critical role played by AMISOM and IGAD in consolidating the peace process in Somalia.

While in Mogadishu, the Deputy Secretary-General met with Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre and cabinet ministers from the Federal Government of Somalia to hear about government policy. The full delegation met the Chairperson of the National Independent Electoral Commission, Halima Ismail Ibrahim, and a group of women civil society leaders who discussed the upcoming 'one person, one vote' elections and countering violent extremism, among other topics.

"The opportunity to hear from a diverse range of voices about the role of Somali

women in different spheres of life drove home just how vibrant and engaged they are, and also how committed they are to ensuring that the role of women and gender equality is factored into all facets of life here," said the Deputy Secretary-General. "This means challenging some outdated

traditional views on the role of women and creating a space for them to be able to fulfill their potential."

The delegation's activities also included meetings with senior officials from the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and UN agencies, funds and programmes to be briefed on the work the world body is carrying out to support Somalia's progress towards political inclusion, lasting peace and socio-economic development, particularly in relation to Somalia's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UN-AU delegation was in Somalia as part of a six-day trip to countries in the Horn of Africa region.

**This is the future the people of Somalia rightly deserve**

