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HIGHLIGHTS

- New top UN official in Somalia visits Federal Member States, pledges support and cooperation
- UN Special Representative briefs Security Council on Somalia
- UN Chief reaffirms world body's support for Somalia's progress and development, during Ramadan visit
- International partners call for calm and restraint in Garowe
- Feature: Fatima Ismail Mohamed: "I saw too many girls suffering from FGM and knew I had to do something"

NEW TOP UN OFFICIAL IN SOMALIA VISITS FEDERAL MEMBER STATES, PLEDGES SUPPORT AND COOPERATION

The newly appointed UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Catriona Laing, completed a series of visits to the Federal Member States (FMSs) of [Hirshabelle](#), [Puntland](#), [South West State](#) and [Jubaland](#), where she met with political leaders and reaffirmed the world body's support and commitment to the country.

Prior to her visits to the FMSs Ms. Laing met with Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre.

During her first visit to Jowhar, the capital of Hirshabelle, on 8 June, Ms.

Laing held talks with President Ali Abdullahi Hussein 'Gudlawe' and other officials on the humanitarian needs and security situation in the state. She also commended his "strong engagement" on national affairs, such as with the country's constitutional review process and state-building efforts.

On 10 June, Ms. Laing travelled to Garowe, the capital of Puntland, where she met with President Said Abdullahi Deni and other officials. She congratulated them on the successful completion of the 'one person, one vote' district council elections in 30 districts, which marked a historic milestone for Somalia's democratization process. Besides from the elections, their exchange also covered Puntland's recent humanitarian activities and federal affairs.

During her second week in Somalia, Ms. Laing visited Baidoa, the administrative capital of South West State, where she met with President Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed 'Laftagareen' and other officials. She expressed her concern over the humanitarian crisis affecting millions of

Somalis due to drought and floods, leading to a number of internally displaced people (IDPs). In the UN Special Representative's exchange with the president, they also discussed how to improve the resilience of South West State in relation to Somalia's ongoing climate shocks.

Ms. Laing concluded her arrival tour with a visit to Kismayo, the capital of Jubaland on 17 June. There she met with President Ahmed Mohamed Islam 'Madobe' and other officials. She reaffirmed the UN's commitment and support to Jubaland in advancing peace, stability and development.

During her visits to the FMSs Ms. Laing also met with the commanders of peacekeepers serving with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), as well as UN staff based in those locations.

The Special Representative was appointed to her position in May this year and arrived in Somalia on 5 June. In addition to serving in various roles in the government of the United Kingdom, Ms. Laing also served with the UN's development arm from 1993 to 1994.





UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE BRIEFS THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON SOMALIA

In June, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Somalia, Catriona Laing, briefed the Security Council on the situation in Somalia.

Below is the transcript of her remarks:

Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

I am pleased to address you for the first time since assuming my duties in Somalia on 5 June. I am delighted to do so alongside the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, His Excellency Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC), Ambassador Souef Mohammed El-Amine and the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Ambassador Cindy McCain.

I am honoured to have the opportunity to serve in Somalia and assure you of my commitment to implement the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission. I am grateful for the warm welcome extended to me by the Federal Government of Somalia, Federal Member States, and the Somali people. The United Nations stands by the

Government and people of Somalia. The recent visit of the Secretary-General to Somalia is testimony to that strong commitment.

I am grateful, in particular, for the close partnership with the African Union Commission. I pay tribute to the dedicated service and sacrifice of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) forces. I take this opportunity to convey my condolences to the Government and people of Uganda for the soldiers who lost their lives and were injured in the attack on the ATMIS Forward Operating Base in Buulo Mareer, Lower Shabelle. While I condemn this heinous attack in the strongest terms, it is a stark reminder of the real and persistent threat Al Shabaab continues to pose.

Mr. President,

My briefing today will cover eight areas:

1. My first two weeks in Somalia
2. Political update
3. Security update
4. Humanitarian update
5. Update on Women, Peace and Security
6. Observations on stabilisation

7. Transition in the international missions
8. Priorities for UNSOM over the next six months

Mr. President,

My first update briefly summarises my first two weeks on the ground.

Since my arrival in Somalia – a country I first served in as a young UN staff member in the mid-90s – I have had the opportunity to meet with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the Prime Minister, other Ministers, and senior government officials and to visit four of the five Federal Member States. I have met members of Civil Society Organizations and engaged with international partners, including Ambassadors from ATMIS Troop Contributing Countries. I have also spoken by phone to President Muse Bihi Abdi of “Somaliland”. On my way to New York, I stopped in Addis Ababa, where I met with the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, and the State Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, H.E. Ambassador Mesganu Arega. My travels around the country have highlighted for me the tremendous progress that Somalia has made in state and peace building. His Excellency the President has rightly set out an ambitious vision for his country, and whilst many challenges and risks lie ahead, there

are also many opportunities, and I urge all international partners to lean in and provide additional support to the people of Somalia.

Mr. President,

My second update covers the political situation.

Somalia has made significant progress in advancing key national priorities. These include

- (i) the appointment of the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission,
- (ii) the passage of 11 pieces of legislation, of which six have already been signed into law; and
- (iii) the successful one-person-one-vote district council elections in Puntland state.

The March and May meetings of the National Consultative Council resulted in three governance proposals:

- (i) the revision of the National Security Architecture;
- (ii) a model for fiscal federalism; and
- (iii) an electoral model.

The proposed electoral model provides for one-person, one-vote elections at the different layers of government. This aspect has generally been well received. Other elements of the NCC electoral proposal – including a shift to a Presidential system, a move to two political parties, and the alignment of electoral terms have received more mixed reactions. I welcome clarification from His Excellency the President that proposals from the NCC are a starting point for further consultation.

With that in mind, I urge the Federal Government to set out its plans for a rigorous and inclusive consultation process – including precise options for consultation and how agreement will be reached before decisions are codified into law or fed into the constitution-making process. Puntland remains outside the NCC process but has indicated it will engage directly with the Federal Government. I encourage this dialogue to start urgently to ensure the process is fully inclusive.

Finally, under my political update, I would like to express my grave concern regarding the ongoing conflict in Laascaanood. The violence has resulted to-date (22 June) in 308 civilian casualties, with 36 people killed and 272 individuals injured. I commend the efforts by all parties and, indeed, this Council to bring about a ceasefire. Following the Press Statement of 7 June, UNSOM good offices are at the disposal of all parties to help agree on a peaceful way forward. To this end, I have engaged key stakeholders and held my first phone call with President Bihi to convey messages on the importance

of dialogue, cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access.

My third update covers the security situation.

The Federal Government-led Counter-Al Shabaab operations have largely been focused on the Middle Shabelle region, Eastern Hiran and Galmudug. During these operations, Al Shabaab has been degraded militarily and dislodged from a number of areas. This is a notable achievement. But Al Shabaab remains a significant threat. The remaining operations under the current Phase 1 offensive are expected to be completed in the coming weeks.

I urge the Federal Government to set out its plans for a rigorous and inclusive consultation process.

Preparations for Phase 2 have begun and operations are expected to be launched in the coming weeks. Additionally, Operation Black Lion, a Somali-led initiative with the “Front Line States”, is due to start in the coming weeks. This is intended to place additional pressure on Al Shabaab.

Three other security challenges regarding the next phase of operation merit attention:

Firstly, operations will take place against a



recent resurgence in the scale, tempo and geographic distribution of attacks from Al Shabaab. Al Shabaab's continuing capability and intent were demonstrated by its attack on the Pearl Beach Hotel in Mogadishu on 9 June, which killed nine people, including one member of the UN family.

Secondly, the next phase of operations, which moves further South, presents more challenging politics and clan dynamics. It will be essential to plan this next phase carefully – to ensure the full integration of military and civilian efforts, including planned stabilization.

Thirdly, operations will occur concurrently with the ATMIS drawdown, putting pressure on planning and logistics.

Mr. President,

My fourth update covers the humanitarian situation and the links to conflict and climate change.

The current operation against Al Shabaab has created opportunities for humanitarian access to people in need. However, insecurity has also contributed to an extremely challenging





operating environment for humanitarian agencies. From January to March, around 430,000 people across Somalia were displaced by conflict and insecurity. Approximately 580,000 people live within territories controlled by non-state armed actors. Most of those displaced are women and children.

Somalia's overall humanitarian situation remains precarious, with 8.25 million people, almost half the population requiring humanitarian assistance. While famine has been averted due to a scale-up of humanitarian assistance and better-than-forecast rain patterns, the rains have also resulted in flooding, affecting at least 468,000 people and displacing 247,000 others. To address critical humanitarian needs, the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan needs more than 2.6 billion dollars. Halfway through the year, the plan is only 29.8 per cent funded. I call on all of Somalia's friends to increase the much-needed funding urgently.

Droughts and flooding are becoming more frequent in Somalia due to recurrent climate shocks. Traditional pastoral livelihoods are under severe pressure, and we are seeing significant urbanization – including an estimated 800,000 more people in Mogadishu. This calls for durable solutions through urban planning and investments in different forms of livelihoods. Somalia needs to access large-scale climate finance for resilience and adaptation, and this will be a priority for me going forward.

Mr. President,

My fifth update is on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS)

The inspirational women leaders of Somalia continue to advocate for their rightful inclusion in political processes and decision-making. The commitment made by Somalia's political leaders to a 30 per cent quota of women representation in the previous federal elections remains unrealized. In the recent district elections held in Puntland, only 17 per cent of those elected were women – down

from 27 per cent in the first phase. Women's participation and representation needs to be codified in relevant legal frameworks, including the constitution. As the first female SRSG in Somalia, I will be putting this issue at the forefront of my work.

Mr. President,

For the sixth part of this briefing, I would like to make observations on stabilisation.

Stabilisation activities continue to be implemented in areas recovered from Al Shabaab. The challenge remains the sustainability of these gains. This will require ongoing security, basic services, reconciliation, and long-term political and state-building processes. UNSOM has responded to the request by the Federal Government of Somalia to step up our response on stabilisation. A stabilisation cell has been created, which will report directly to me.

Our shared ambition must be matched with the resources to deliver the necessary stabilisation response, and future military operations must be planned alongside stabilisation interventions.

For the seventh section of this briefing, I would like to discuss our transition plans.

Mr. President, you will recall that UNSOM's strategic review (S/2022/716) recommends that the mission plan for a triple transition. The first is the security transition. The second is the possible drawdown of UNSOS and the handover of the mission support functions to UNSOM. The third transition is the eventual handover from UNSOM to the United Nations Country Team. The three transitions are interdependent, and we cannot make decisions on one without carefully considering the consequences for the others. But the overriding driver is the security transition.

As we will hear from His Excellency, the President and the SRCC the planned June drawdown of ATMIS and handover to the Somali security forces is proceeding. My provisional assessment of transition

going forward is that the complexity, the constraints, and pace of the transition process present risks. This will be challenging. I have started by forming a transition cell to ensure coherent mission-wide planning. This team is now working intensively on transition in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. I would like to reassure members that we are identifying the questions that need to be addressed – but some of the solutions will demand a collective endeavour.

Mr. President,

For the eighth and final section of this briefing, I will conclude by highlighting my **top five priorities for the UNSOM mission over the next six months**.

My first priority will be preparing the United Nations for the three transitions ahead, taking account of the challenges I have outlined above.

Second, I will be focusing on positioning UNSOM to play a lead role in bringing together the international community efforts on stabilization.

Third, I will be prioritising supporting the various elements of the state building process – in particular those related to the elections process – ensuring inclusive consultations, including with Puntland.

Fourthly, I will support ongoing efforts to bring the conflict in Laascaanood to a peaceful conclusion.

Fifthly, I will support the Federal Government of Somalia to achieve HIPC completion and an associated shift from humanitarian into resilience-based development programming, including on climate.

Across all priorities, I will encourage the rightful participation and representation of women. Somalia needs to draw on the full talent of all its population if it is to tackle the numerous challenges ahead.

In conclusion Mr. President, the United Nations stands ready to support His Excellency President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in achieving his vision of "Somalia as a country at peace with itself and the world". I thank you and the Security Council for your continued support.





UN CHIEF REAFFIRMS WORLD BODY'S SUPPORT FOR SOMALIA'S PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT, DURING RAMADAN VISIT

Wrapping up his solidarity visit to Somalia in April, the United Nations chief reaffirmed the world body's commitment to supporting the Horn of Africa country as it continues on its path to peace and stability.

“Somalia faces many challenges, but in the spirit of Ramadan, I also bring a message of hope and renewal – the United Nations stands in solidarity with the Somali people. Let us come together to advance peace and security, sustainable development and human rights – and build a better future for all Somalis,” Secretary-General António Guterres said.

The UN's top official was addressing a news conference in the Somali capital, Mogadishu on 12 April.

On 11 April, the Secretary-General met

with Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and members of his cabinet and advisors, visited internally displaced families in South West State on a trip to Baidoa, and met separately with civil society organisations and the heads of UN agencies, funds and programmes working in support of Somalis.

Progress and support

In his remarks at the news conference, the UN chief noted that despite severe challenges, the people of Somalia continued to demonstrate enormous strength and resilience.

“During the six years since my last visit, we have seen progress on peace, security and sustainable development. In my talks with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and the Government, we discussed how the United Nations system can continue to support Somalia in building on this positive momentum,” Mr. Guterres said.

“I commended the President's efforts to advance peace and security, and highlighted the importance of strong collaboration with Federal [Member] States to address the

threats posed by Al-Shabaab,” he added. “The United Nations is committed to supporting national and regional efforts to protect human rights and combat terrorism and violent extremism.”

The UN chief noted that that support included through the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), a multidimensional mission that includes military, police and civilian components, and which is mandated by the UN Security Council to assist Somali security forces in their fight against the Al-Shabaab terrorist group.

Civil society's vision

While in Mogadishu, the Secretary-General also met with representatives of Somali civil society organisations working in women's affairs and empowerment, climate change, persons with disabilities, youth and marginalised groups.

He told the media that he was “deeply inspired by their vision and energy.”

“A safe and inclusive civic space is essential to good governance and can help prevent and reduce violence. The full participation



of Somalia's women and young people in political life – including the constitutional review – is critical,” Mr. Guterres said. “I welcome the Government's commitment to women's rights and representation and call for the full implementation and codification of the 30 per cent quota for women in elections.”

At Somalia's last electoral process, completed in 2022, there had been a goal of achieving a minimum of 30 per cent women's representation in the federal parliament.

In the end, women took up just 21 per cent of parliamentary seats, down from 24 per cent of parliamentary seats in the 2016/17 electoral processes. The United

Nations has previously said that meeting the 30 per cent quota is an important first step to full representation and an inclusive society in Somalia.

Humanitarian crisis

The Secretary-General's last visit to Somalia, in 2017, was during a large-scale humanitarian operation to prevent famine. His visit this year came as Somalia grapples with a devastating drought which led to the deaths of 43,000 people in 2022 alone.

Urgent assistance is needed for some 8.3 million Somalis, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The drought has displaced 1.4 million Somalis – with women and children making up 80 per cent of

these people. Food prices are rising and aggravating hunger and malnutrition.

“Today, the situation is once again alarming. Climate change is causing chaos. Somalia has experienced five consecutive poor rainy seasons, and this is unprecedented... Poor and vulnerable communities are pushed by the drought to the brink of starvation, and the situation can get worse. We must act now to prevent a catastrophe,” Mr. Guterres said.

The UN chief's two-day visit to Somalia was part of his annual tradition of paying solidarity visits to Muslim countries during the Holy Month of Ramadan, during which he joins in observing the related fast and sharing an Iftar meal.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS CALL FOR CALM AND RESTRAINT IN GAROWE



In June, international partners* expressed concern about the violence in Garowe and its impact on civilians. The partners called for the immediate de-escalation of tensions and a return to calm. They called on all political stakeholders to engage in dialogue as the only avenue to address and resolve differences.

They noted that the recent escalation, risks jeopardizing the positive outcomes secured following the recent district council elections in Puntland.

*African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Djibouti, Ethiopia, European Union (EU) Delegation, Finland, France, Germany, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Netherlands, Norway, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, and United Nations.

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FATIMA ISMAIL MOHAMED

"I SAW TOO MANY GIRLS SUFFERING FROM FGM
AND KNEW I HAD TO DO SOMETHING"

One morning in 2011, Fatima Ismail Mohamed was seated in her 8th grade classroom in the Somali capital of Mogadishu waiting for the lesson to begin, when suddenly her friend seated next to her dropped to the ground, writhing in pain.

At the time, she did not understand what was happening.

As she progressed through middle school, Ms. Mohamed witnessed more of her friends facing the same pain and distress during their menstrual cycle.

Eventually, she learned that their painful experiences were the result of female genital mutilation (FGM), which can lead to painful menstruation, irregular menses and difficulty passing menstrual blood.

This knowledge set Ms. Mohamed on a path towards activism for the rights and wellbeing of Somali girls and women.

"I saw too many of my friends suffering, and I knew I had to do something," she recalls. "FGM is a human rights violation against girls that causes them to suffer for the rest of their lives – it is a crime that deprives

girls of their basic rights and dignity."

But the practice of FGM – which involves the partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons – is a long-running one in Somalia, and even though she was young, Ms. Mohamed knew that she had to be well-prepared for the battles ahead.

"I knew that my fight against this age-old harmful practice needed to start with a credible education that would provide me with the right tools and skills to be an effective advocate," she notes.

Ms. Mohamed was born in Mogadishu in 1998, at a time when pursuing education was difficult for girls, partly due to the civil war but also due to traditions that perpetuated the belief that girls would marry young and start families and, therefore, education was not necessary.

Despite the challenges, and with support from her family, she persevered. She graduated from high school in 2015, and went on to pursue tertiary education. She received her bachelor's degree in medical laboratory sciences from Al-Hilaal University in 2019 and another bachelor's degree, this time in nutrition and dietetics, from the Capital University of Somalia in 2022.

From classrooms to camps

While pursuing her education, Ms.

Mohamed remained steadfast in her commitment to become an advocate against FGM.

Outside of the classroom, she volunteered as a midwife in local hospitals and also conducted information sessions with girls living in camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) on the outskirts of Mogadishu.

FGM is a human rights violation against girls that causes them to suffer for the rest of their lives – it is a crime that deprives girls of their basic rights and dignity.

In the sessions, she would explore the impact of FGM on the attendees, and provide survivors with a safe space to share their experiences and concerns.

"Hearing their stories motivated me to encourage parents to protect their daughters from the practice of FGM," she says. "I speak with both mothers and fathers, pleading with them to shield their

daughters from this harmful tradition.”

But it was not just family members with whom the 25-year-old activist had to deal with.

Tackling the issue meant also engaging with traditional midwives working in the IDP camps – a tightknit group – and trying to convince them to stop performing the operation.

“It was not always easy to persuade women who had been performing FGM for years to stop because cultural norms and beliefs that necessitate FGM, such as ensuring the purity of the girl, were widespread,” Ms. Mohamed says.

“I sat down with some of these traditional midwives and explained to them the life-long pain they were causing to some of these girls,” she adds. “It was difficult to convince them to change because it is ingrained in our culture that pain is part of being a woman.”

Stories of survivors

Ms. Mohamed’s dedication to the challenge of ending FGM in Somalia prompted her to write a book on the issue – ‘Hadimo Haween’ – which was published in 2022.

“I wrote the book because I saw the severity of the situation women are facing, especially in IDP camps on the outskirts of Mogadishu. It covers incidents I documented over five years, from 2016 to 2021, including numerous first-hand stories of survivors about the impact of FGM on their lives,” she says.

“I believe this book will serve as a valuable resource and a legacy for future generations to eliminate this practice in Somalia, and possibly elsewhere in the world,” says Ms. Mohamed. “It is necessary to address the cultural beliefs and attitudes that support the practice. FGM is one of the many expressions of power and control over girls’ and women’s bodies and their sexuality. It is a gendered and harmful practice and needs to be understood as such and stopped.”

Gender-based violence

Ms. Mohamed’s work on ending FGM exposed her to other challenges that Somali women face, especially gender-based violence (GBV).

According to the United Nations, violence against women and girls remains the most pervasive human rights violation around the world. Already heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, its prevalence is now being further increased by the intersecting crises of climate change, global conflict, and economic instability.

In Somalia, in addition to FGM, GBV is another harrowing reality that deeply



affects the daily lives of many women and girls. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) has noted that, from 2019 to 2022, a staggering 74 per cent of survivors accessing GBV prevention and support services were IDPs, with 93 per cent of them being female, and with the current situation further exacerbated by Somalia’s ongoing drought.

According to data from UNFPA, 2023 saw a five per cent increase in reported rape cases in February compared to January. The data also showed a six per cent increase in reported cases of intimate partner violence for February compared to January, and a four per cent increase overall for 2023.

Working with organizations such as the Ifrah Foundation, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) focused on the eradication of FGM, Ms., Mohamed

provided GBV prevention training to community members as well as safe spaces and counselling services for survivors. She currently works with the Northern Frontier Youth League (NoFYL), an NGO whose primary focus is supporting education, providing protection to vulnerable

“It is necessary to address the cultural beliefs and attitudes that support the practice.”



populations, combating GBV, and improving healthcare services.

"With NoFYL I work on a variety of projects, including managing GBV cases and providing counselling and psychosocial support to survivors," Ms. Mohamed says.

In her engagement with GBV survivors, she has been confronted with the harsh reality of the countless women who have suffered at the hands of their abusers, both within and outside their families.

Ms. Mohamed recalls one incident: "A story that touched my heart early this year was one of an 18-year-old girl who lives in an IDP camp in Mogadishu. She was raped and is now eight months pregnant as a result; she told me how the rape affected her life."

She says interacting with such survivors opened her eyes to the different forms of GBV being perpetrated on women and girls in Somalia.

"I gained a deeper understanding of the horrific nature of violence against women. Their stories demonstrate the devastating impact of rape, forced marriage and FGM," Ms. Mohamed says. These conversations serve as a powerful reminder of why my work is so crucial, and strengthens my resolve to continue to fight for the rights of those women who face different forms of gender-based violence.

Long-term plans

To effectively contribute to the prevention of FGM and GBV, Ms. Mohamed is currently pursuing a master's degree in health science with a focus on health services management.

She hopes to conduct research on sustainable solutions to issues faced by women and prepare herself for a leadership role in a local hospital.

"Women in Somalia face many challenges, particularly in fields such as healthcare, where we lack opportunities compared to men. However, by pursuing my education and enhancing my skills and knowledge, I am confident that I can make a greater difference in the lives of Somali women," says Ms. Mohamed.

Prevalent practice

Globally, more than 200 million women and girls live with the consequences of FGM.

In Somalia, 99 percent of girls and women between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone the procedure, with the majority being cut between the ages of five and nine, according to the 2020 Somali Health and Demographic Survey.

Girls and women who undergo FGM often experience long-term health consequences, including scarring, cysts, abscesses, and other tissue damage, infertility, and increased susceptibility to infections. They may experience difficulty and pain when they menstruate, urinate, or have sexual intercourse.

Furthermore, the consequences go far beyond the physical. FGM marginalises women and reinforces gender inequality by perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes that limit women's potential.

UNFPA notes that, despite UN resolutions calling for the elimination of FGM, the practice remains near universal in Somalia, with recent estimates indicating that more than 2.1 million girls in Somalia are at risk of FGM between 2015 and 2030.

In Somalia, UNFPA works with Ms. Mohamed and others like her to address the needs of women and girls who have been impacted by FGM and other forms of GBV by providing them with safe spaces, health care and psychosocial services.

In addition, UNFPA and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are working together to end FGM within one generation. This initiative is linked to SDG 5, which calls for the end of all harmful practices by 2030.

To achieve SDG 5, the UNFPA-UNICEF



programme has adopted a multi-faceted approach. First, it seeks to shift social norms in affected communities by raising awareness about the harmful effects of FGM and promoting alternative practices. Second, it collaborates with governments to put in place viable national response systems to prevent and address cases of FGM. Lastly, it prioritizes building a global movement of allies who are committed to eliminating the practice of FGM.

I am confident that I can make a greater difference in the lives of Somali women.

