



STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEMOCRATIZATION SUPPORT
TO SOMALILAND



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ACRONYMS

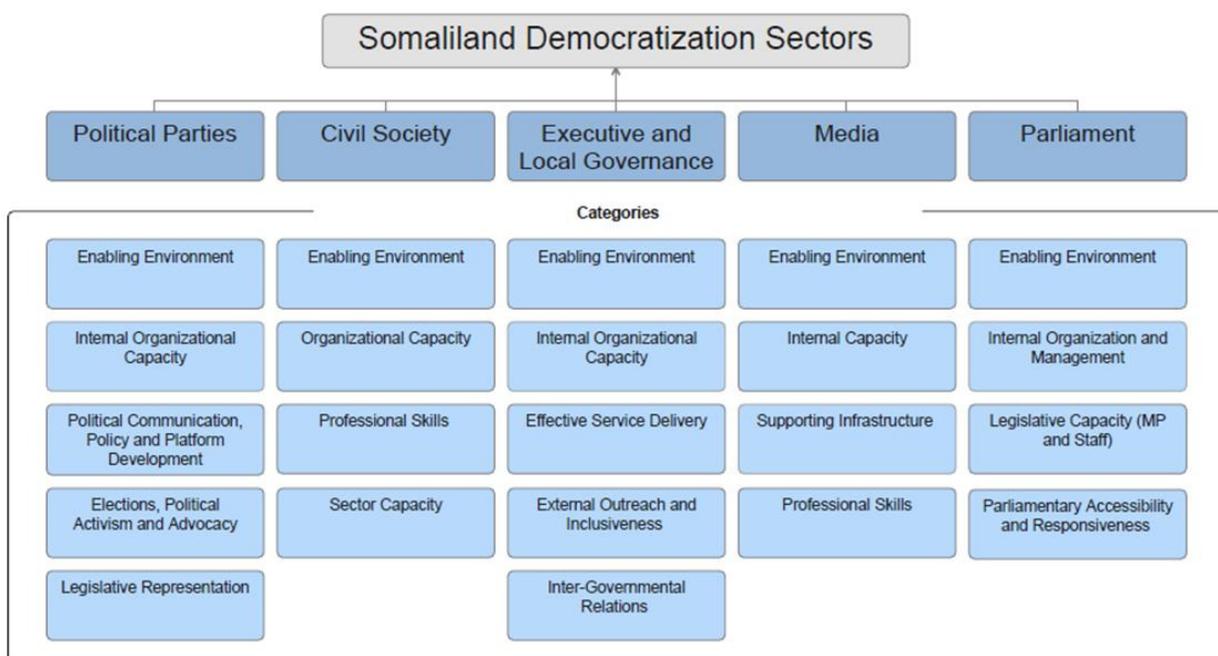
BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
CSO – Civil Society Organization
DAI – Development Alternatives, Inc.
DFID – Department for International Development (UK)
IOM – International Organization for Migration
IRI – International Republican Institute
NED – National Endowment for Democracy
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
UCID – Justice and Welfare Party
UDUB – United Democratic Party
UN – United Nations
USAID – United States Agency for International Development

FORMAT OF REPORT

The following report includes sections for each of the five strategic sectors (political parties, civil society, executive and local governance, the media and parliament) of democracy and governance programming examined for the development of this strategy. Discussion in each section was informed by desk research and in-depth interviews with donors, implementing partners, Somaliland stakeholders and subject matter/regional experts. Similarly, there is a section dedicated to the history of international donor support to Somaliland and priorities expressed by the donors for future assistance.

Each section includes eight subsections, plus an opportunity map:

1. **Overview:** Introduction to the sector being examined.
2. **Legal Context and Background:** This sub-section covers any historical background that is relevant for understanding the current state of the particular sector. Further, any relevant legal context that affects the sector, positively or negatively, is examined here.
3. **Actors:** The actors sub-section discusses key groups or institutions that make up or influence the sector.
4. **Alliances and Strategies:** This sub-section examines key relationships within the sector and/or key partnerships across sectors. Further, any relevant strategies, such as the *National Development Plan*, that are of particular note for the sector are identified.
5. **Future Considerations:** This sub-section identifies key factors or events to be aware of in the short to medium term, such as elections, that will affect the sector itself or that could influence the international community's approach to assistance to a specific sector.
6. **Somaliland Strategy Analysis Framework:** In order to inform the development of this democratization strategy, the International Republican Institute (IRI) conducted an analysis of each sectors' interests, needs and priorities within a framework developed especially for this project. Each sector framework includes relative categories and sub-categories of the sector's activities, interests and influences, both real and potential. The framework categories were used in the stakeholder workshops to facilitate discussion of the needs and challenges faced by each sector and to identify priorities for future assistance to each sector as articulated by local stakeholders. Each section of this report that is dedicated to a particular sector includes a graphical representation of the sector framework. The overall *Somaliland Strategy Analysis Framework*, which includes all five sectors and their subsequent sector categories, is as follows:



7. **Priorities for Democratization:** This sub-section outlines the priorities for future democracy and governance assistance identified by participants in stakeholder workshops and in-depth interviews with local stakeholders. Priorities are organized by the sector categories and sub-categories of the *Somaliland Strategy Analysis Framework* for that sector. In the case of the *International Donor* section, the priorities outlined were articulated by members of the international donor community interviewed by IRI; discussion of these priorities is supplemented with input provided by representatives of international implementing partners through in-depth interviews.
8. **Priority Opportunities for International Support:** This sub-section outlines priority opportunities or recommendations for future democracy and governance support to Somaliland. The opportunities were informed by the priorities articulated by local stakeholders and the international donor community, as well as the expertise of the assessment team.
9. **Opportunity Map:** An opportunity map is provided for each sector. The opportunity map shows the priorities articulated for each sector by representatives of the international donor community and the sectors themselves. Priorities that were articulated by both the donors and representatives of the sector are identified in the area of overlap.

METHODOLOGY

Overview

IRI received a grant from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) to develop a strategy for international democratization support to Somaliland covering the following strategic sectors: political parties, civil society, executive and local governance, media and parliament. DFID's intent is for the strategy to be utilized by the international donor community in the coordination and planning of future democracy-support programs to Somaliland.

IRI has worked in Somaliland since 2002, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and DFID to implement programs that support the development of a robust civil society, well organized and representative political parties and a modernized legislature that engages in issue-based policy making. In 2010, IRI fielded an international delegation to observe Somaliland's presidential election.

Primary Audience: DFID and international donors funding democracy assistance programs in Somaliland.

Assessment Questions:

1. What components of democracy and democratic governance should be supported by international donor assistance?
 - a. How are these prioritized by different stakeholders and beneficiaries?
 - b. What actors are important to these components?
 - c. What possible entry points exist for support to these components?
 - d. How should these be prioritized? Low, medium and high priority?
 - e. What components are currently being fulfilled and what gaps remain?
2. What is the existing context for primary democratic actors under the strategic pillars of political parties, civil society (including media), parliament and national and local governance?
 - a. Who are the key actors?
 - b. What are the most pressing enablers and constraints?
 - c. What are the existing resources?
 - d. What alliances/relationships/power structures and strategies exist?
 - e. What are their priority areas for democratic development in the future?
3. What is the status of international donor support to democratic consolidation in Somaliland and what opportunities are there for future support?
 - a. What is the background of international democracy assistance support to Somaliland as it relates to the present day?
 - b. Who are the actors?
 - c. What issues are they addressing? How?
 - d. What issues do they think should be prioritized in the future?

4. What larger context of Somaliland in the Horn of Africa should be considered when developing a democratization strategy for Somaliland?
 - a. Are there specific elements that should not be addressed by international donor support?

Data Collection Method and Sources:

To develop the *Strategy for International Democracy and Governance Assistance to Somaliland*, IRI utilized a mixed methods approach to provide a balance of quantitative and qualitative data, incorporate rigorous participatory methods and allow triangulation of findings to increase validity and discover convergent patterns. The main study methods included: a desk review of key documents, donor and implementing partner questionnaires, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and guided strategy workshops.

Desk Review: IRI conducted a desk review of existing documents pertaining to democratic consolidation of and democracy assistance to Somaliland, to provide complementary information and analysis to assist in responding to the four assessment questions. The desk review also informed background and context for the strategy and the preparation of data collection tools.

Questionnaire: IRI disseminated a questionnaire to all international donors and implementing agencies providing democracy assistance to Somaliland. The intent of the questionnaire was to gather preliminary information on: the types of programs that are currently being funded and have been funded in the past, a brief assessment of the value of future funding for those programs, and perceived priorities for future democracy assistance. The questionnaire was disseminated in advance of field travel.

In-Depth Interviews: In-depth interviews were conducted with members of the international donor community, international implementing partners and subject matter experts in Washington, D.C.; Nairobi, Kenya; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Hargeisa, Somaliland in March, April and May 2013. In-depth interviews were also conducted with Somaliland stakeholders from all of the strategic sectors (political parties, civil society, executive and local governance, media and parliament). The interviews provided qualitative information to inform background and context, as well as to inform IRI's preparation for group workshops. In particular, in-depth interviews helped to map relationships and alliances, identified the priorities, issues and challenges of different actors and informed appropriate entry points for democracy assistance programs. In-depth interviews conducted with international stakeholders included the following:

Hargeisa, Somaliland	
Zahra Dahir	Oxfam
Mahdi Sheikh	United Nations Development Programme
Alexandra Windisch-Grätz	United Nations Development Programme
Martin Vane	Danish Refugee Council
Nairobi, Kenya	
Mark Bradbury	Rift Valley Institute
Oliver Chevreau	Saferworld
Michael Cottier	Embassy of Switzerland
Wamugu Gatheru	Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation
Hodan Hassan	United States Agency for International Development
Lauren Oing	International Republican Institute
Meredith Preston McGhie	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
Angus Miller	UK Department for International Development
Abdullahi Mohamed	United States Agency for International Development
Mervyn Patterson	UK Department for International Development
Erik Pettersson	Embassy of Sweden
Francesca Pavarini	European Union
Abdirahman Raghe	Interpeace
Ulf Terlinden	Interpeace
Vishalini Lawrence	DAI
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	
Roger Coleman	British Embassy
Washington, D.C., USA	
Bronwyn Bruton	Atlantic Council
Marissa Lemargie Lavaque	United States Agency for International Development
Jeremy Meadows	United States Agency for International Development
J. Peter Pham	Atlantic Council
Scott Pool	International Republican Institute
Eric Robinson	National Endowment for Democracy
London, England	
Steve Kibble	Progressio
Mark Walls	University College London

Strategy Workshops: Strategy workshops served as the main vehicle to prioritize, reach consensus and build buy-in from all local stakeholders on their priorities for future assistance. In the workshops, IRI led participants in mapping exercises utilizing a strategic framework

developed for each sector. During the workshops, participants discussed and refined the components of the strategy, ranked and prioritized the components into low, medium and high priority support and brainstormed entry points. The workshops were held according to the following schedule:

Somaliland Stakeholder Group/Sector	Date
Media	April 28, 2013
Executive Governance	April 28, 2013
UCID Political Party	April 29, 2013
Civil Society	April 29, 2013
Waddani Political Party	April 30, 2013
Western Somaliland Local Governance	April 30, 2013
Kulmiye Political Party	April 30, 2013
Somaliland Parliament	May 2, 2013

* A strategy workshop for Eastern Somaliland Local Governance was planned for May 5. Due to security challenges, IRI personnel were unable to travel to Burao for the workshop.

The data collection methods and data sources for each evaluation question are summarized in the following table:

Evaluation Question	Data Collection Method				Data Source						
	<i>Document Review</i>	<i>Questionnaire</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Workshops</i>	<i>International Donor</i>	<i>Implementing Agency</i>	<i>Political Party Stakeholder</i>	<i>Civil Society Stakeholder</i>	<i>Parliament Stakeholder</i>	<i>National Government Stakeholder</i>	<i>Local Government Stakeholder</i>
1. What components of democracy and democratic governance should be supported by international donor assistance?	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
a. How are these prioritized by different stakeholders and beneficiaries?				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
b. What are entry points and actors important to these components?			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
c. How should these be prioritized in the immediate, intermediate and long-term?					X	X	X	X	X	X	X
d. What components are currently being fulfilled, and what gaps remain?		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Evaluation Question	Data Collection Method				Data Source						
	Document Review	Questionnaire	Interviews	Workshops	International Donor	Implementing Agency	Political Party Stakeholder	Civil Society Stakeholder	Parliament Stakeholder	National Government Stakeholder	Local Government Stakeholder
2. What is the existing context for primary democratic actors under the strategic pillars of political parties, civil society (including media), parliament and national and local governance?	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X
a. Who are the actors?	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X
b. What are the top issues and challenges?	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X
c. What are the existing resources?	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X
d. What alliances/relationships and strategies exist?	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X
e. What are their priority areas for democratic development in the future?	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X
3. What is the status of international donor support to democratic consolidation in Somaliland, and what opportunities are there for future support?	X	X	X		X	X					
a. What is the background of international democracy assistance support to Somaliland as it relates to the present day?	X	X	X		X	X					
b. Who are the actors?	X	X			X	X					
c. What issues are they addressing? How?		X	X		X	X					
d. What issues do they think should be prioritized in the future?		X	X		X	X					

Evaluation Question	Data Collection Method				Data Source						
	Document Review	Questionnaire	Interviews	Workshops	International Donor	Implementing Agency	Political Party Stakeholder	Civil Society Stakeholder	Parliament Stakeholder	National Government Stakeholder	Local Government Stakeholder
4. What larger context of Somaliland in the Horn of Africa should be considered when developing a democratization strategy for Somaliland?	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
a. Are there specific elements that should not be addressed by international donor support?	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Presentation of Initial Findings: On June 28, 2013, IRI presented initial findings of the assessment to members of the international donor community during a meeting of the Democratization Steering Committee in Nairobi, Kenya. IRI conducted follow-up phone calls with members of the Democratization Steering Committee following the presentation in June and July 2013 to understand donor perspectives on the initial findings and to further understand where donor and Somaliland stakeholder priorities overlap and to ensure that the strategy is utilization-focused.

INTERNATIONAL DONOR HISTORY AND PRIORITIES

History of International Democracy and Governance Support to Somaliland¹

Given the myriad challenges facing Somalia and the international community's complex relationship with it, international donor support to Somalia has primarily focused on improving the security situation and the provision of humanitarian aid.² Self-declared, though not internationally recognized,³ Somaliland has drawn the attention of a small, committed group of international donors for its relative stability and commitment to democratic processes. Following the conclusion of its civil war, "Somaliland has emerged as the most stable polity within the territory of the former Somali Republic, and indeed, since 1996, one of the most peaceful places within the Horn of Africa."⁴

Members of the international donor community have provided support to democracy and governance initiatives in Somaliland since the mid-1990s. Progressio (formerly the Catholic Institute for International Relations and known in Somaliland as International Cooperation for Development) began working in Somaliland with "nascent local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) which have played a crucial role in providing services to marginalized communities in Somaliland...[and] to build their capacity to work on issues" in 1995.⁵ The War-Torn Societies Project International, renamed Interpeace in 2006, began receiving support in 1998 from international donors to provide support to peace-building processes, primarily through the establishment of its local partner, the Academy for Peace and Development.⁶ NED began supporting Somaliland's civil society through small direct grants to local civil society organizations in the late 1990s. While NED continued to provide direct support to Somaliland civil society organizations, and Interpeace continued to receive support to conduct peace-building programming⁷, in 2002 the international donor community's support to Somaliland demonstrated a substantial shift in focus. From 2002 to present, democracy and governance support from the international community has overwhelmingly focused on Somaliland's electoral processes.

¹ This section was compiled based on interviews with donors and implementing partners in Washington, D.C., Nairobi, Kenya, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Hargeisa, Somaliland and through the utilization of web and print resources. IRI does not claim that this is a definitive description of democracy and governance support provided to Somaliland stakeholders, though IRI made an effort to be as comprehensive as possible.

² Most international donor support to Somaliland is included within funding mechanisms which are inclusive of all three Somali regions: South Central, Puntland and Somaliland.

³ Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991.

⁴ Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 49.

⁵ Progressio. *Further Steps to Democracy*, 2005, p.5

⁶ Interpeace, since commencing work in Somaliland, has received funding from numerous international donors who coordinate their support to Interpeace through the Democratization Steering Committee. Donors who have contributed funds to support the work of Interpeace in Somaliland include: the European Commission, USAID, DFID, the Embassy of Denmark, the Embassy of Sweden, the Embassy of Norway, the Swiss Confederation, the Government of Finland and Cooperazione Italiana.

⁷ Interpeace implemented the *Dialogue for Peace I* program from 2004 to 2006, the *Dialogue for Peace II* program from 2006 to 2008 and is currently implementing the *Pillars of Peace* program (commenced in 2009) in Somaliland.

Support to Somaliland's Electoral Processes

2002 Local Council Elections

Following ratification of its constitution in 2001, Somaliland called for its first democratic elections, local council elections, to be held in late 2002 (these elections would also determine the three official political parties that would field presidential and parliamentary candidates). It was planned that harmonized presidential and parliamentary elections would occur shortly thereafter in early 2003.⁸ In the lead-up to these critical first elections for Somaliland, several key challenges needed to be addressed. Among these key challenges were the lack of capacity and experience of the National Electoral Commission, established in December 2001, in managing and overseeing electoral processes; the fact that “the political organizations had no experience in contesting elections or resources for mounting one;” the absence of a voter register or census; and, the dearth of voter education programs for citizens.⁹ It was within this context that the international donor community expanded its assistance to Somaliland to provide support to its electoral processes, with the “elections attract[ing] the first substantive support from international donors for political activities in Somaliland.”¹⁰

In advance of the December 2002 local council elections, the European Commission, with an interest in “support[ing] the move towards the establishment of democracy and good governance in Somalia” and understanding that elections “are complex, and within fragile post conflict societies, can result in renewed conflict,” provided support¹¹ which “co-financed the [December 2002 local council] election with the government,” fielded a technical assistance mission through the German Organization for Technical Cooperation to support the National Electoral Commission and provided training to election workers and domestic observers.¹² The donor community also supported the War-Torn Societies Project International (Interpeace) to conduct election-related programming through the Academy for Peace and Development, which included the Academy “host[ing] regular consultations between Somaliland’s political parties, the National Electoral Commission and the government in the preparation of local and presidential elections...[which] culminated in the signature of a common code of conduct for all political parties.”¹³ Additionally, USAID commenced its democracy and governance support to Somaliland in 2002, funding capacity building support to political parties, both in the pre- and post-election periods, through IRI. Support to IRI was also provided by NED to prepare Somaliland’s political parties to compete in local, parliamentary and presidential elections. In reflecting on this pre-2002 local council election period, Dr. Iqbal Jhazbhay explained, “outside technical assistance and expertise, as well as funding and training from such quarters as the European Commission and IRI, helped to carry Somaliland through an important learning

⁸ Local council elections took place in December 2002 and presidential elections took place in April 2003. Parliamentary elections were delayed by two years to September 2005.

⁹ Jhazbhay, Iqbal D. *Somaliland: An African Struggle for Nationhood and International Recognition*. Johannesburg: Institute for Global Dialogue/South African Institute of International Affairs, 2009. Print, p. 51.

¹⁰ Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 188.

¹¹ Funds contributed by Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Ibid. p. 188.

¹² European Union Report on the Somaliland local elections Held on December 15, 2002. Also, see Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 188.

¹³ *Democracy in Somaliland: Challenges and Opportunities*. Rep. Hargeysa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2010. Print, p.2.

curve.”¹⁴ In addition to pre-election capacity building and support to the administration of electoral processes, the international community was active in the observation of the 2002 poll. Progressio, then the Catholic Institute for International Relations/International Cooperation for Development, fielded a small international observation mission in 2002.¹⁵ Subsequently, Progressio fielded observation missions to monitor Somaliland’s elections in 2003, 2005, 2010 and 2012.

2003 Presidential Election

In advance of the April 2003 presidential election, funding from USAID and NED to IRI to provide capacity-building and elections programming to Somaliland’s three political parties¹⁶ continued, as did funding to War-Torn Societies Project International to support the Academy for Peace and Development to serve as a moderator between electoral stakeholders. In 2003, the Academy for Peace and Development implemented election monitoring programming by training party poll agents and deploying domestic observers.¹⁷ Given the timing and sensitive political nature of Somaliland’s presidential election within the broader Somalia context, the European Commission did not provide financial or programmatic support to the 2003 election as it did in 2002. Some individual European Commission member states did provide support for technical assistance and voter education initiatives, and DFID provided support to finance the electoral process.¹⁸ The presidential election was held on April 14, 2003 with international and domestic election observers present from South Africa, Ethiopia, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Canada and the United Kingdom.¹⁹

2005 Parliamentary Elections

In the interim period between elections, international support for democracy and governance programming in Somaliland waned, but some ongoing support continued through implementing partners such as Interpeace and IRI, and NED provided direct support to local organizations. Parliamentary elections were initially planned to follow the 2003 presidential election within a year; however, due to internal disagreement over issues such as the allocation of geographical representation of parliamentary seats, constituency boundaries and the voter registry, Somaliland’s first parliamentary elections were postponed to September 15, 2005.²⁰ The international community viewed the conduct of parliamentary elections as “vital for the stability of the state of Somaliland...and the chances of failure - or flawed or irregular elections, which would betray the trust of the voting public - were much greater than during the [2003] presidential election.”²¹ As such, significant international donor support was provided to the

¹⁴ Jhazbhay, Iqbal D. *Somaliland: An African Struggle for Nationhood and International Recognition*.

Johannesburg: Institute for Global Dialogue/South African Institute of International Affairs, 2009. Print, p. 51.

¹⁵ Progressio, *Further Steps to Somaliland*, p. 4-5.

¹⁶ The United Democratic Party (UDUB), Kulmiye and the Justice and Welfare Party (UCID) became Somaliland’s three official political parties following the December 2002 local elections.

¹⁷ *Democracy in Somaliland: Challenges and Opportunities*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2010. Print, p. 2.

¹⁸ Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 190. Also, see *A new donor approach to fragile societies: the case of Somaliland*, ODI.

¹⁹ Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 194.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 202-204.

²¹ *A Vote for Peace: How Somaliland Successfully Hosted Its First Parliamentary Elections in 35 Years*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2006. Print, p. 6.

parliamentary electoral process, including from the European Commission which “having declined to support the presidential election, was now ready to support the parliamentary elections as part of a broader democratization project.”²² According to the Academy for Peace and Development, “the international community became interested when the process was at a critical junction, and its political support and commitment to fund the election came when most needed,”²³ particularly given that the Somaliland government had funds available to cover only 30 percent of the projected costs associated with administering the election.²⁴

Support to the 2005 electoral process was provided by the international community in a variety of forms. The British Embassy in Addis Abba provided an expert consultant to offer technical support to the drafting of the requisite election law, which was passed in January 2005 by the Somaliland parliament. The War-Torn Societies Project International and the Academy for Peace and Development “provided various technical inputs to enhance the administrative capacity and efficiency of the National Electoral Commission”²⁵ and supported dialogue between political parties, the National Electoral Commission and government which culminated in the signing of a political party code of conduct for the electoral process by these stakeholders on July 27, 2005.²⁶ IRI, through funding from USAID, provided training to Somaliland’s three political parties to prepare them to conduct campaigns and compete in elections at the national and regional level, and capacity building support to youth and women-focused civil society organizations. Together, IRI and the War-Torn Societies Project International trained approximately 6,000 political party agents in the weeks immediately preceding elections. IRI produced and distributed a manual on electoral conduct and procedures to election officials, party agents and security officers. Further, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service Trust and the Academy for Peace and Development worked with Somaliland media and the National Electoral Commission to create and sign-on to a media code of conduct for elections.²⁷

In addition to the provision of support to Somaliland stakeholders, international election monitoring missions were supported for the 2005 parliamentary elections. Progressio, at the invitation of the National Electoral Commission, fielded an official election monitoring mission

²² Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 205.

²³ *A Vote for Peace: How Somaliland Successfully Hosted Its First Parliamentary Elections in 35 Years*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2006. Print, p.17.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 11.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 17.

²⁶ *International Republican Institute Somaliland September 29, 2005 Parliamentary Election Assessment Report*. Rep. Washington, D.C.: International Republican Institute, 2005. Print, p. 11.

²⁷ *A Vote for Peace: How Somaliland Successfully Hosted Its First Parliamentary Elections in 35 Years*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2006. Print, p. 16.

that included 76 observers from 20 countries.²⁸ IRI, working in concert with the Progressio delegation, fielded a seven member observation team with funding from USAID.²⁹

2010 Presidential Election

From 2006 to 2008, Interpeace, through support to the Academy for Peace and Development, implemented its *Dialogue for Peace II* program. The implementation of this program coincided with Somaliland preparing for another round of elections, as President Riyale's term was scheduled to end on May 15, 2008. The Academy for Peace and Development explains that "under the auspices of the *Dialogue for Peace II*, [it] was able to facilitate a series of consultative meetings to discuss ways to resolve disputes over such issues as the formation of the National Electoral Commission, the electoral timeline and the extension of the president's term in office,"³⁰ provide "technical and legal assistance to the Somaliland parliament to review and reform the electoral law and procedures...raise public awareness of the importance of the elections and encourage the constructive and non-partisan involvement of civic and media organizations."³¹

As was the case with Somaliland's prior elections, the second presidential election garnered attention and support from the international community. According to the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum:

It is widely acknowledged by all the main stakeholders that Somaliland would not have made much progress in its democratization process, particularly with regard to holding the last two critical elections, without the financial, technical and moral support of the international actors, specifically western donors. Everybody accepts that the Somaliland government was incapable of raising sufficient funds for holding most of these elections. It did provide funds for the referendum on the constitution and the local council elections, but contributed only 30 percent of the funds required for holding the 2010 presidential elections.³²

However, the lead-up to the presidential election was marred by a number of political disputes, including those related to the extension of the term of office for the president and *Guurti*,³³ the appointment of a new National Electoral Commission and voter registration. As a consequence, the poll was delayed five times to June 26, 2010.

²⁸ Countries represented included "namely Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, the Philippines, Germany, France, Sweden, the Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Denmark, Spain, Finland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Among these were several Somalilanders from the diaspora in the United Kingdom, Sweden and Canada." See Progressio, *Further Steps to Somaliland*, p.4-5.

²⁹ *International Republican Institute Somaliland September 29, 2005 Parliamentary Election Assessment Report*. Rep. Washington, D.C.: International Republican Institute, 2005. Print.

³⁰ *Democracy in Somaliland: Challenges and Opportunities*. Rep. Hargeysa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2010. Print, p.2-3.

³¹ *A Vote for Peace II: A Report on the 2010 Somaliland Presidential Election Process*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2012. Print, p. 15-16.

³² *Somaliland Elections Review Report*. Rep. Hargeisa: Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum, 2011. Print, p. 36.

³³ Members of the House of Elders, known as the *Guurti* in Somali.

The international donor community provided funding to Interpeace, as it had in previous elections, to take the lead in providing technical assistance to the National Electoral Commission in advance of the 2010 presidential election, which included the provision of technical support to the biometric voter registration process. Interpeace's local partner, the Academy for Peace and Development, also provided assistance to the National Electoral Commission, including "advice to the National Electoral Commission regarding the resolution of disputes related to voter registration and the electoral process, the development of a voter education handbook, monitoring of the voter registration and polling process and serving as a member in the civil society advisory group established by the National Electoral Commission."³⁴ Interpeace also hosted a training and discussion with Somaliland media which led to the adoption of a media code of conduct on April 25, 2010.³⁵

Through funding from USAID, IRI trained political party agents and domestic observers to monitor the 2008 voter registration exercise and hosted televised discussions on the Somaliland voter registration process to help citizens better understand the process and registration timelines. Further, IRI provided capacity building support to political parties in advance of the election on their roles and responsibilities in electoral processes and implementing election campaigns. Finally, IRI trained more than 5,000 political party agents in the days prior to Election Day.³⁶ IRI's party agent trainings were supplemented with the development of a party agent manual and video (filmed and produced in partnership with the Academy for Peace and Development's audio visual unit).

In 2008, at the invitation of the National Electoral Commission and with support from the European Commission, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue provided technical advice to the National Electoral Commission and political parties "on methods for resolving electoral disputes... [and drew] on its mediation experience to contribute to the development of a system of Electoral Dispute Resolution for the Somaliland elections."³⁷ Further, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue "produced guidelines for a code of conduct for political parties during the elections and set up a political party liaison committee."³⁸ Together with the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue also implemented an electoral mediation project whereby 600 respected members of local communities were trained and deployed as local mediators "to be available across the country on Election Day to intervene in any conflicts that occurred outside or inside polling stations."³⁹

As was the case in 2005, the international donor community supported numerous election observation missions of the June 26, 2010 presidential poll. Progressio, the Development

³⁴ *A Vote for Peace II: A Report on the 2010 Somaliland Presidential Election Process*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2012. Print, p. 43.

³⁵ *Making Peacebuilding Inclusive: Interpeace Annual Report 2010*. Rep. Geneva: Interpeace, 2011. Print, p. 48-49.

³⁶ The National Electoral Commission financially supported the deployment of political party agents on Election Day.

³⁷ "Our Work in Somaliland." *Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue*. N.p., n.d. Web. July 2013. <<http://www.hdcentre.org/en/our-work/peacemaking/somaliland/>>.

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Walls, Michael, and Steve Kibble. *Somaliland Change and Continuity: Report by International Election Observers on the June 2010 Presidential Elections in Somaliland*. Rep. London: Progressio, 2011. Print.

Planning Unit at University College London and Somaliland Focus were “invited in January 2009 by Somaliland’s National Electoral Commission to act as coordinators of the international observation mission for presidential elections” and fielded a team of 59 election observers representing 16 countries⁴⁰ with funding from the British Embassy in Addis Ababa. The European Commission provided in-kind air transportation for Progressio’s observers from Nairobi to Hargeisa.⁴¹ IRI also deployed a 19-member delegation, with funding from USAID, to observe the election with representatives from the Czech Republic, Kenya, Nigeria, Norway, Sierra Leone, Serbia, Spain and the United States.

Domestic observers were also trained to observe Election Day processes with support from the international community:

In mid-2008, the European Union initiated funding for training of local observers through a new community-based umbrella organization, the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum. In order to distance the European Union from a perception that they were providing support for national elections in an unrecognized state, Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum funds were to be channeled through the United Kingdom-based international NGO Saferworld...With Election Day looming, it was clear that Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum would be unable to provide the necessary complement of observers in time, so the training program was augmented by three major NGO umbrella organizations, Nagaad (the network of women’s organizations), the Somaliland National Youth Organization and the Forum for Peace and Governance. In the event, some 800 local observers were trained (500 by Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum and 300 more through Nagaad, Somaliland National Youth Organization and the Forum for Peace and Governance).⁴²

2012 Local Council Elections

DFID funded the program to support the 2012 local council elections in Somaliland, the Somaliland Elections Project, which incorporated six implementing partners: IRI, Oxfam, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Interpeace, Progressio and Saferworld.

IRI, Interpeace and Progressio implemented the “supply” side of the Somaliland Elections Project. IRI worked with Somaliland’s three existing political parties as well as newly formed political associations to develop their capacity to compete in the local council elections, conducted campaign schools for women and youth candidates and, working with the Academy for Peace and Development, trained 9,374 poll agents. IRI also worked with the Registration of Political Associations and Approval of Political Parties Committee to build its capacity to establish a strategic plan, build stronger relationships with political parties and associations and

⁴⁰ Progressio’s observation team represented 16 countries including Argentina, Canada, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Somalilanders living in the diaspora comprised 40 percent of the observation team.

⁴¹ Walls, Michael, and Steve Kibble. *Somaliland Change and Continuity: Report by International Election Observers on the June 2010 Presidential Elections in Somaliland*. Rep. London: Progressio, 2011. Print.

⁴² Walls, Michael, and Steve Kibble. *Somaliland Change and Continuity: Report by International Election Observers on the June 2010 Presidential Elections in Somaliland*. Rep. London: Progressio, 2011. Print, p. 9-10.

effectively carry out its duties and contribute to successful local council elections. IRI also assisted the Registration of Political Associations and Approval of Political Parties Committee in educating electoral stakeholders on key electoral rules and legal frameworks.

Interpeace provided assistance to the Somaliland National Electoral Commission by providing expert guidance and technical assistance to National Electoral Commission staff, training regional and district electoral officers on their election oversight duties and training 3,477 polling station workers. As was the case in the 2005 and 2010 elections, Progressio implemented an international election observation mission that included the deployment of three long-term observers and 50 international observers on Election Day.

On the “demand” side, Oxfam conducted a program targeted at rural communities to encourage marginalized groups, including pastoralists and youth, to understand their rights and responsibilities as voters and to encourage their participation in the electoral process. Saferworld’s program “included the training of 677 domestic observers to monitor the elections and the establishment of the Somaliland Civil Society Election Forum. This provided a platform for non-state actors to oversee electoral legislation and its compliance and advocate on election-related issues on behalf of their constituent communities.”⁴³ The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue built on its work in advance of the 2010 presidential elections to support an electoral dispute resolution mechanism.

Support to Somaliland’s Civil Society

NED began supporting Somaliland’s civil society through small direct grants in the late 1990s, recognizing that civil society organizations had formed in Somaliland that were providing social services and serving other institutional roles in the absence of a robust government. NED support initially focused on fostering the basic functions of a developing civil society within a fragile political and development context, and has evolved to its current support of relatively advanced projects conducted by more mature civil society organizations⁴⁴ and support to relatively new civil society organizations on emerging issue topics, such as encouraging political participation of rural women.

Over the years, NED has also provided grants to international organizations such as Independent Diplomat “to work with senior government officials and civil society leaders to promote stronger relationships and coordination between the two.”⁴⁵

As part of its USAID-funded Elections and Parliamentary Support program (2007-2011), IRI provided support to civil society groups representing Somaliland’s marginalized populations, including training and consultations to the Somaliland Marginalized Advocacy Group to build organizational capacity in its formative years and to help its leaders build consensus around the organization’s identity and purpose. Further, between May 19, 2008 and April 8, 2010, IRI

⁴³ Makokha, Jacinta, and Yussuf Ali. *Somalilanders Speak: Lessons from the November 2012 Local Elections*. Rep. Saferworld, Apr. 2013. Web. July 2013, p.i.

⁴⁴ Such as support to the Institute for Practical Research and Training to provide technical support to the Somaliland parliament and the Somaliland National Youth Organization to conduct advocacy on issues related to youth democratic engagement.

⁴⁵ “Somaliland.” *National Endowment for Democracy*. National Endowment for Democracy, n.d. Web. July 2013. <<http://www.ned.org/where-we-work/africa/somaliland>>.

facilitated 11 public forums that gave the Somaliland Marginalized Advocacy Group, all three political parties and members of parliament an opportunity to highlight the needs of traditionally overlooked citizens and to generate support for new laws and systems to create more inclusive political and electoral processes.

Interpeace commenced its *Pillars of Peace* program in 2009, working in Somaliland with its local partner the Academy for Peace and Development. According to the Academy for Peace and Development, the *Pillars of Peace* program aimed to: “provide a peace building approach as the basis for support to state building processes, such as democratization.”⁴⁶ In the preliminary phase of this program, the Academy for Peace and Development carried out the “Pillars Mapping Exercise,” a qualitative and participatory consultation exercise with community representatives which focused on brainstorming key impediments to its three pillars: democratization, decentralization and social reconciliation.⁴⁷ In October 2010, the Academy for Peace and Development presented the draft findings of its “Pillars Mapping Exercise” to the National Program Group meeting in Hargeisa for validation.⁴⁸

The European Commission has supported Saferworld to work in Somaliland since 2004 to lead “[a] process to set up legitimate and representative non-state actor structures in Somaliland that are able to engage in policy dialogue,” which in 2008 led to the formation of the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum.⁴⁹ Saferworld’s support to the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum to become a platform for civic actors to engage with domestic partners and with the international community on issues of peace-building, stability and security has continued since. Saferworld is currently working to increase the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum’s capacity in the area of policy analysis and advocacy.⁵⁰

Support to the Somaliland Parliament

With USAID funding, IRI is currently working with the Somaliland parliament to modernize its internal processes, improve constituent outreach and engage in issue-based policy making. IRI provided support to the Office of the Secretary General of the Somaliland parliament to improve parliamentary transparency and accountability through the development of a parliamentary website, www.somalilandparliament.net. The site, published in Somali and English, provides a public portal through which Somalilanders have access to information about passed and pending legislation, session minutes and upcoming House of Representatives events and sessions. IRI also worked with the Office of the Secretary General to develop and distribute a *Parliament of Somaliland Members’ Directory* and to track parliamentary votes by political party.

In 2011, IRI introduced the concept of issue-based caucuses to members of parliament and emphasized the value of incorporating citizen input into the policymaking process. Members of

⁴⁶ *Democracy in Somaliland: Challenges and Opportunities*. Rep. Hargeysa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2010. Print, p. ix.

⁴⁷ The Academy for Peace and Development conducted field work for the ‘Pillar Mapping Exercise’ in June-July 2009 and January-February 2010.

⁴⁸ *Democracy in Somaliland: Challenges and Opportunities*. Rep. Hargeysa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2010. Print.

⁴⁹ Makokha, Jacinta, and Yussuf Ali. *Somalilanders Speak: Lessons from the November 2012 Local Elections*. Rep. Saferworld, Apr. 2013. Web. July 2013, p.1.

⁵⁰ Interview with Saferworld.

parliament sharing common interests subsequently congregated around two priority issues in Somaliland – healthcare and the environment – ultimately forming the country’s first ever health and green caucuses. IRI has supported both caucuses in conducting consultations with various stakeholders throughout Somaliland during a series of cross-regional field hearings. Based upon the input received from the public during these regional field hearings, each caucus selected three top-priority issues to address in draft legislation. To help parliament research and draft this desired legislation, IRI facilitated the creation of six joint working groups composed of members of each caucus plus representatives of relevant civil society organizations, academics and other noted experts on the respective issues. Through the joint working groups, members of civil society have the opportunity to provide further input on the issues as they assist parliament in drafting the legislation, while members of parliament are actively engaging and cooperating with civil society. In 2013, IRI also expanded its work with parliament by helping the legislative committees plan public forums on issues of interest and legislation, including elections-related issues of voter registration and the parliamentary elections law and the draft Media and Access to Information bill. IRI’s work with the Somaliland parliament, as well as political parties, has been informed by two public opinion polls conducted by IRI.⁵¹

As part of its USAID-funded Elections and Parliamentary Support program (2007-2011), following the 2005 parliamentary elections, IRI worked with the Somaliland parliament to increase the capacity of newly elected members of the House of Representatives, along with members of the *Guurti* and legislative staff, to understand and fulfill their roles and responsibilities and to conduct constituent outreach. In October 2010, with funding from NED, IRI hosted five members of the Somaliland parliament on a study tour to Northern Ireland to learn about legislative mechanisms, political party processes and to gain perspective on post-conflict reconciliation. While the study tour gave the participants an opportunity to learn about the technical side of legislative drafting and procedures in committees and on the assembly floor, the Northern Irish hosts also gave a thorough history of how the decision-making processes came to be as inclusive as they are today. The delegation met with an array of political actors including the speaker of the house, representatives from all political parties, legislative assembly staff and even former Irish Republican Army and loyalist paramilitary members who are now promoting peace through civic engagement. These meetings and site visits presented the group with a wide range of perspectives and sparked ideas of initiatives they could implement in Somaliland.

Since 2004, the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa, with funding from the European Union, has also provided support to the Somaliland parliament including “training, workshops, seminars and study visits for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff with the objective to create an environment that fosters knowledge sharing of the democratic process... it has also provided equipment and built a new plenary hall for Somaliland’s parliament in Hargeisa that was inaugurated in 2011.”⁵² Most recently, the Association of European

⁵¹ IRI’s first poll was fielded September 28 – October 8, 2011 in the electoral district of Hargeisa. (<http://www.iri.org/news-events-press-center/news/iri-releases-new-survey-somaliland-public-opinion>). The second nationwide poll was fielded June 16-24, 2012 (<http://www.iri.org/news-events-press-center/news/iri-poll-poverty-unemployment-are-most-important-issues-facing-somalil>).

⁵² "Somaliland: More Support for Stability and Regional Cooperation." *Africa-EU Partnership*. Africa-EU Partnership, 6 July 2011. Web. 10 Sept. 2013. <<http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/fr/node/5111%20>>.

Parliamentarians for Africa's assistance has focused on providing support to legislative committees.

Support to Political Parties

IRI has provided assistance to Somaliland's political parties since 2003 with funding from USAID and NED, though much of this political party programming has focused on preparing them to participate in electoral processes (as described above). Following the 2005 elections, IRI's support to Somaliland's three political parties included policy development and communications training in the immediate post-election period, capacity building for political party women and youth leagues and political party organizational development assistance. In 2007, IRI supported one member of each of Somaliland's three political parties to participate in its USAID-funded election observation mission of Kenya's December 2007 general elections. Following the 2012 local council elections, IRI focused on strengthening organizational structure, improving internal communication and providing assistance with strategic planning to all three political parties, including establishing, for the first time, district-level party branches active outside of the election season and providing them with much needed political and technical skills. IRI remains the only organization that works with political parties on their development.

Support to Local Governments

In 2008, five constituent bodies of the United Nations (UN), including the International Labour Organization, UN Development Program, UN Settlements Program, UN Capital Development Fund and UN Children's Fund, initiated the Somalia-wide UN Joint Program on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery program. The intent of the UN Joint Program on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery is to "support good governance (transparency, accountability and participation) and effective management in regional and district councils, increase public investment in basic services, and strengthen civic awareness and participation in local decision-making and development."⁵³ Funding for this program has been contributed by the European Commission, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Danish International Development Agency, DFID, USAID, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the governments of Norway and Italy.⁵⁴

Broadly speaking, the UN Joint Program on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery focuses on three key areas in support of decentralization and local governance: 1) policy development and legal frameworks, 2) capacity development and 3) service delivery. Through this program, funds are provided to district governments to finance small infrastructure and social service projects. In Somaliland, the project works with seven target districts of Borama, Gabiley, Hargeisa, Berbera, Zeila, Burao and Oodweyne, and additionally provides capacity building support to relevant government ministries⁵⁵ as their roles relate to providing

⁵³ "Joint Programme Fact Sheet." *JP Somalia Local Governance & Decentralization*. United Nations Development Programme, n.d. Web. July 2013. <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/JSO00?fund_status_month_to=>.

⁵⁴ "Joint Programme Fact Sheet." *JP Somalia Local Governance & Decentralization*. United Nations Development Programme, n.d. Web. July 2013. <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/JSO00?fund_status_month_to=>.

⁵⁵ UN Development Program, for example, works closely with the Ministry of Interior. International Labour Organization, alternatively, works closely with the Ministry of Public Works on projects such as the building of roads. As the UN Children's Fund works primarily on health, water and education projects, it works closest with the ministries relevant to the provision of those services.

oversight, monitoring and standards setting for the partner districts. Each UN partner implements components of the Joint Program on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery program. In its role, for example, UN Development Program also works with district government officials to engage in government planning (including developing, updating and revising their district development frameworks) and budgeting processes in a transparent and participatory fashion and to improve coordination between district governments and ministries. The UN Children’s Fund, conversely, focuses on coordinating civil society in planning processes and conducting civic education and civic outreach.

In 2011, USAID commenced its Transition Initiatives for Stabilization program⁵⁶, implemented by Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with the goals of “increase[ing] confidence in all levels of governance through the delivery of targeted, strategic interventions that improve service delivery; support[ing] collaboration between government, private sector and civil society; and increase[ing] dialogue on peace, recovery and development in Somalia.”⁵⁷

In Somaliland, DAI and IOM partnered directly with government ministries and district administrations to provide in-kind grants for infrastructure projects (such as construction/rehabilitation of roads, municipal buildings and schools) and the development and implementation of government administrative systems (such as the establishment of revenue collection centers in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and the piloting of a civil registration system with the Ministry of Interior). Prior to the start of construction of infrastructure projects, DAI supported Somaliland government partners to facilitate community discussions and consensus-based planning processes with local stakeholders to identify and plan an infrastructure project that meets the needs of and is tailored to the individual community. Similarly, IOM utilized “a collaborative process that brings stakeholders together from the inception of grant ideas, through implementation, to the closing of each grant.”⁵⁸

Local council elections in November 2012 ushered into office a host of newly-elected local leaders, a transition that IRI, with funding from DFID, supported by offering a workshop on the legal framework of local government in Somaliland based on Law No. 23/2007, and conducting district-level public opinion surveys to provide councilors with information on citizen priorities, satisfaction with various local services and how they view interactions and communications with local government. This pilot program was implemented in two districts in Awdal and Maroodi-Jeeh regions.

Support to the Media

International community support to media and journalists has likely been the most limited in terms of democracy and governance programming provided to Somaliland, likely due to the limited legal and political space that exists for the media to operate.

⁵⁶ At the time of drafting, the Transition for Stabilization program was ongoing.

⁵⁷ "Transition Initiatives for Stabilization (TIS-Somalia)." *U.S. Agency for International Development*. U.S. Agency for International Development, n.d. Web. July 2013. <<http://www.usaid.gov/somalia/fact-sheets/transition-initiatives-stabilization-tis-somalia>>.

⁵⁸ *Transition Initiatives for Stabilization (TIS)*. Nairobi: International Organization for Migration, 2012. Print.

Prior media development initiatives have included small NED grants, which included direct grants to the Somaliland Journalist Association to support core operating costs and organizational capacity development, and programming by the Somaliland Journalist Association that includes “advocacy on behalf of journalists for fair and safe working conditions and for the government to fulfill its promise to pass a broadcasting law that will allow for private radio licenses and the emergence of independent radio stations.”⁵⁹ The Somaliland Society for Independent Journalists and Writers has received NED grants to “increase interaction between the media and members of parliament,”⁶⁰ “train [independent] journalists on ways to improve their skills and increase the professionalism of their newspapers,”⁶¹ and to develop recommendations on the media’s role in and to encourage coalition-building between media and civil society organizations to combat corruption.⁶² NED has also provided grants to the Women in Journalism Association to conduct capacity building for women journalists.⁶³

In addition to direct grants provided to Somaliland organizations, Free Press Unlimited has, since 2011, maintained a media training center in Hargeisa to conduct media production and training programming for journalists. Further, a range of equipment and facility improvements were provided to the Ministry of Information through the DAI-implemented Transition Initiatives for Stabilization program, which included the provision of equipment to Somaliland National Television. The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) includes a chapter assessing the Somaliland media sector in its annual *Media Sustainability* publication. To inform the 2012 edition, a panel discussion was held with representatives of Somaliland media outlets in partnership with the Social Research and Development Institute in Hargeisa.⁶⁴

Issues

The following section covers existing challenges and factors to be mindful of in developing future democracy and governance programs for Somaliland, as identified by representatives of the international donor and implementing partner community interviewed for this strategy.

Donors are Primarily Based in Nairobi

In discussions with donor agencies currently supporting programs in Somaliland and their implementing partners, it was almost universally expressed that one of the top issues or challenges to supporting democracy and governance (and likely other forms of development assistance) initiatives in Somaliland is the fact that donors are primarily based in Nairobi. One donor explained that “our main problem is, of course, that we’re sitting in Nairobi and that we are far away from our partners.” Though travel to Somaliland on the part of the donor community has, in the last few years, increased, some donor agencies maintain, namely for

⁵⁹“Somaliland.” *National Endowment for Democracy*. National Endowment for Democracy, n.d. Web. July 2013. <<http://www.ned.org/where-we-work/africa/somaliland>>.

⁶⁰*2007 Annual Report*. Rep. Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for Democracy, 2008. Print.

⁶¹ *2008 Annual Report*. Rep. Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for Democracy, 2009. Print.

⁶² *2009 Annual Report*. Rep. Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for Democracy, 2010. Print.

⁶³ *2010 Annual Report*. Rep. Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for Democracy, 2011. Print.

⁶⁴ “Somaliland Media Sustainability Index” IREX, 24 Apr. 2013. Web. Aug. 2013. <<http://www.irex.org/resource/somaliland-media-sustainability-index-msi%20>>.

security and political reasons, strict regulations on official personnel travelling to Somalia, which includes travel to Somaliland. The effect of limited ability to travel to Somaliland was explained by one donor in the following way:

I think one of the frustrations as a donor that has very tight security restrictions and travel restrictions on us is it's very difficult to be able to get out and talk with key stakeholders and really get a feel for programs on the ground because you're limited in your access to it, so we're highly dependent on folks coming through Nairobi and telling us what is going on, or relying on our partners that are working on it to tell us what's going on. But I think there's something to be said for donors to be able to have their own engagement with key stakeholders and hear direct feedback from them.

As articulated above, several of the donors interviewed indicated that they have instituted mechanisms to attempt to minimize the challenges that come with being based in Nairobi, including heightened coordination and information sharing with each other and their implementing and local partners. One donor explained: "that engagement can be improved [through] a closer cooperation with the stakeholders on the ground." In a positive development, some donor agencies have already established a satellite office or other form of limited presence in Hargeisa, or are planning to do so in the near future. Additionally, members of the Democratization Steering Committee (described below under "Coordination") have also recently made efforts to make short trips as a group to Hargeisa to hold coordination meetings with implementing and local partners.

Programming is Focused Primarily on Hargeisa and Other Major Cities

In contrast to the challenges faced by the international donor community in traveling to and establishing a presence in Somaliland, many of their international implementing partners have operations based in Somaliland in some capacity, with a combination of international and local staff working in-country on a full or part-time basis. However, similar to the challenge listed above, many of the international implementing partners lamented difficulties traveling and working outside of Hargeisa, namely due to security concerns. Implementing partners articulated the following in this regard:

What's always a challenge in these environments is security and our ability, especially on and around Election Day, to then get out and about. I know that was a frustration for our team this time around;

Yes, security is a challenge;

Obviously, logistics is a challenge, travel is a challenge, security is a challenge.

Despite the concerns over security, implementing partners keenly expressed a desire to reach populations outside of Hargeisa with their programs. While this does not prohibit programming in other areas of Somaliland – almost all of the programs currently being implemented work in some capacity with partners and in locations outside the capital – implementing partners placed a high priority on increasing the level of work outside Hargeisa. Sentiments expressed in this regard include the following:

Anytime that we get out of Hargeisa and we're able to work with groups who are not based in Hargeisa, I think we see a little bit more impact and the information is better received...aside from Hargeisa, especially when it comes to governance [programming], the country's pretty much neglected...the comment you hear over and over again is, "No one ever comes to talk to us." The dissemination of information outside of the capital is pretty much nonexistent... I think trying to do politics, democracy, governance outside of the capital is a really important...Getting out of Hargeisa, that should be the number one priority. Voices outside Hargeisa just aren't getting heard.

and:

Sometimes, a lot of times we find that rural communities are marginalized. There's so much focus on the city and working in Hargeisa and working where there is exposure, where is this infrastructure and so on, but there's a large rural community... When we talk about citizens, a lot of Somaliland citizens are nomadic. They're moving from one place to another. They're farmers, they live in rural communities, and then we just might forget that. We think everybody is up the way they are in the city, which they're not really.

Shift in Focus to South Central/Position of Somaliland

The vast majority of donor and implementing partners IRI interviewed identified the position of Somaliland within the greater Somalia context and/or the recent shift in focus of the international community to South Central Somalia as an issue with the potential to greatly affect donor support to Somaliland. Certainly, Somaliland's status as a self-declared, but not internationally recognized, independent state has posed challenges for donor engagement since its start; donor governments cannot completely separate support to Somaliland from the political, logistical and security implications of providing support to Somalia. Restrictions on travel to Somalia for many personnel associated with Western governments, for example, have applied to Somaliland as well. However, the 22-year period following the overthrow of the Barre regime in 1991 provided an opportunity for attention to be focused on Somaliland, "an island of relative peace and stability"⁶⁵ within the Horn of Africa region, generally, and Somalia, specifically.

With the adoption of a provisional constitution and the indirect election of a parliament and president in 2012, the view of South Central Somalia began to change as exemplified by the United States' formal recognition of the new Somali government on January 17, 2013.⁶⁶ Since the installation of the new Somali government in 2012, "the aid community seems to be warming up to Somalia, widely seen as a new 'donor darling' after decades of neglect."⁶⁷ How

⁶⁵ United Nations. News Centre. *New UN Envoy Hails Somaliland as 'island of Relative Peace and Stability' in Insecure Region*. UN News Centre. United Nations, 13 June 2013. Web. Aug. 2013. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45173#.UjCK23_heTV>.

⁶⁶ The United States had not recognized a Somali government since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991.

⁶⁷ Ravelo, Jenny L. "Why MSF Pulled out of Somalia." Devex, 15 Aug. 2013. Web. Aug. 2013. <https://www.devex.com/en/news/why-msf-pulled-out-of-somalia/81626?mkt_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRonuKvIde/hmjTEU5z17UsWqW3hokz2EFyeLIHETpodcMS8RkNaTFAwTG5toziV8R7bNKc1r2NkQXBfn>.

this shift in focus toward South Central will fare for Somaliland is yet to be seen, varying perspectives on the matter were expressed by representatives of donors and implementing partners interviewed, including:

I think that as South Central opens up, a lot of the donor attention is obviously starting to float south, and I think it's important to remind folks that while, yes, South Central is opening and needs a ton of support, we need to maintain a certain level of support for Somaliland...So, I think just making sure that that focus doesn't completely shift is a big concern of ours;

The challenge was, in my opinion, making sure that Somaliland didn't get lost in the larger Somalia conversation...we don't want to get to the point where you do all the right things and you don't get any reward for that, but you do all of the wrong things and that's where all the attention is. So I think that's the biggest challenge for Somaliland, it's to make sure that it's not lost in this larger Somalia conversation;

The context is becoming very difficult because Somalia is emerging...Now you have that kind of limbo on the side of the identity and context because a lot of attention has shifted to Mogadishu. What does that mean to the [Somaliland] democratization process?...I would be remiss if I didn't point out in terms of challenges of the relationship between Somalia and Somaliland right now. As Somalia is now solidifying its government, I think that we have to be careful that the donor community doesn't run away and just focus on Somalia now and Puntland, that they continue to focus on Somaliland;

As you might understand, the political attention is at the moment on the south, but still from the development side, it's still important also to have a balance between the support;

I think you will see an increased engagement in Somalia over the years to come as things open up and assuming the security situation holds and the progress kind of continues to move forward. How much of that will go into Somaliland versus the rest, I think, is still an open question, but I think there is a realization that even though Somaliland is in a very, very different democratic stage and in a different political stage, that there is still a lot of work to be done and a lot of things to be supported.

Historical Donor Focus on Elections

As can be seen from the *History of International Democracy and Governance Support to Somaliland* section of this report above, democracy and governance support from the international community to date has been overwhelmingly focused on Somaliland's electoral processes; significant levels of assistance were provided for the 2003, 2005, 2010 and, to a lesser extent, 2012 elections with programming generally waning in the inter-election periods. Although in recent years several longer-term programs have been implemented that do not have an election focus, such as the UN Joint Program on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery, the Transition Initiatives for Stabilization and IRI's USAID-funded parliamentary support programs, a number of donors and implementing partners interviewed

expressed a desire for the focus of the international donor community to take a more holistic approach to democracy and governance support to Somaliland. One interviewee explained that, while successful elections and the peaceful transfer of power have contributed much to the consolidation of democracy in Somaliland:

It [elections] doesn't automatically come with improved governance. That is still something that needs to follow through where the role and shape of the political parties is important, where the practice and the capacity of parliament is absolutely critical, and where accountability mechanisms between the elections, especially with the local councils, are very important and not nearly as much supported or in place as they should be. So I think we have to also look at the bigger picture and try to build on the elections to genuine democratic content...keep an eye on the consolidation, give space to actual periods of governing and not just electioneering.

Along these lines, one interviewee stated, "Somaliland won't be judged only on elections, but what happens in-between," and encouraged a heightened focus on democratic governance and internal democracy of government operations.

While much emphasis was placed by the donors and implementing partners interviewed on broadening democracy and governance support to Somaliland in the period between elections, several of those interviewed expressed a need to take a more long-term view of support to electoral processes to include electoral reform and sustained work/capacity building with the National Electoral Commission and other election administration bodies. For example:

We're so focused on the election stuff, I think my worry generally is that we sort of peak around the elections and then everybody falls off. I think that in terms of the next couple of years, I would say that a more sustained focus [is needed] on the root issues that will anchor a more credible elections processes or series of elections processes going forward, so, like real electoral reform; when the new National Electoral Commission comes in, there needs to be some more long-term training; they need to be engaged right away; the issues of the Registration of Political Associations and Approval of Political Parties Committee, and the Registration of Political Associations and Approval of Political Parties Committee should be doing all of those sorts of things.

Alliances and Strategies

Coordination Mechanisms

The primary coordinating mechanism utilized by members of the international donor community working in Somaliland is the Democratization Steering Committee,⁶⁸ which has seven Nairobi-based donor members: the European Commission, the governments of Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, DFID and USAID. The Democratization Steering Committee was initially formed as a venue for donors to coordinate their support to Interpeace,

⁶⁸ The Democratization Steering Committee also serves as a coordination mechanism for work conducted in Puntland.

which receives funding for its *Pillars of Peace* and democratization programs from multiple sources. In the period leading up to the 2010 presidential election, the Democratization Steering Committee began to take on an expanded role to include donor coordination for other programming. While a number of international partners, including Oxfam and IRI, now implement programs in Somaliland with funding from members of the Democratization Steering Committee, Interpeace continues to serve a facilitation role as the only non-funder and implementing partner member of the Democratization Steering Committee. The Democratization Coordination Committee was established subsequent to the Democratization Steering Committee as a mechanism for program coordination that is inclusive of a wider group of organizations, including donors that do not fund Interpeace and the other international implementing partners working in Somaliland; however, the Democratization Steering Committee remains the primary mechanism utilized by the donors working in Somaliland to coordinate programs.

The general impression by donor and implementing partner interviewees of the coordination among international partners working in Somaliland was positive. One interviewee explained, “The Democratization Steering Committee exists now for the ninth year in a row. There’s no other donor committee with this degree of specialization that has existed for such a long time, not nearly.” Others said the following:

One thing that I’ve seen as positive over the last number of years is that it’s the same organizations that have been working on the various elections, and so that we are, it seems to me, developing an institutional memory about these... I think what’s been nice to see when we’ve been working with the Democratization Coordination Committee and others is that when we come, it’s we come back for the next rounds of meetings, it’s, Saferworld and Oxfam and IRI and [others], and some of the staff may have changed but the institutional memory of all those institutions and what they’ve done before remain...I think, related to that is that we all managed to coordinate very, very effectively. And I think that one of the things that I really appreciated enormously about the work in Somaliland has been the close coordination and actually the strong coordination through the Democratization Steering Committee and the Democratization Coordination Committee with the donors and with the other NGOs. I think it’s actually a very healthy environment; everybody has specific niches that they work on in different pieces of the puzzle;

and:

I think coordination I guess in Somalia overall is not very good. But for the democratization part in Somaliland, it's actually - compared to the rest - very good I would say... like the close engagement with Interpeace and the support to the elections and so on, and the close connection to the donor communities, to the big donors through the Democratization Steering Committee. It's working very well. And also they have the broader - it's called the Democratization Coordination Committee, whereas other NGOs as well are involved.

Other donor and implementing partner interviewees indicated that coordination could be improved through more consistent participation by the various donors, particularly outside the pre-election period. One donor explained:

Coordination is lacking among donors...Donors did a much better job of coordinating in 2010...We need to figure out a way to maintain the Democratization Steering Committee for Interpeace specific work but also have something broader for democracy and governance support to Somaliland. We tried to do this by setting up the Democratization Coordination Committee, which is inclusive of more partners.

In addition to coordination among donors and implementing partners, there have also been cases of successful coordination between the international community and Somaliland institutions. For example, the National Electoral Commission has served as a coordinator for voter education programming being conducted in advance of elections. According to one implementing partner:

The coordination was through the National Election Commission, but all the organizations working on civic voter education will come so they would all say these are what we have planned. We're planning to do some voter education; we're planning to go to these regions; we're planning to go to these regions. And they would sort of map out - have we covered enough regions, if there's something that's missing, and so on.

The National Electoral Commission also identified Progressio to serve as the “official facilitator and organizer of all of the international election observers” in 2005, 2010 and 2012 through a formal memorandum of understanding. Similarly, the speaker of the House of Representatives took the initiative to coordinate support to parliament: “the speaker held coordination meetings, and so, IRI, the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa and UN sat down and hashed out what we were doing in that. I mean, that was good because that was partner-driven, we’re going to divide the labor.” The Ministry of Interior has also worked to establish a mechanism for coordination of governance initiatives, the structures of which remain in the early stages of development, with the UN Development Program as the co-chair.

In other areas however, one interviewee explained:

I mean the districts have their planning process. The national level has their planning processes. Sector ministries have their planning processes. NGOs have their planning processes, and the UN projects have that. So everyone has their own things and there's not yet really that synergy. How can you make sure that you still link community priorities to national targets that it's still nationally-owned and that you then are able to draw in resources so that you don't have different people coming in and funding different things? So that's a challenge in terms of coordinating the planning around national ownership, around planning the links between the districts, the sectors, and the national level, and then also the link to the sort of aid community and the donors. That's not where it could be.

Donor Priorities for Democratization Support to Somaliland:

Voter Registration

One of the priorities expressed by multiple donor interviewees was the need for Somaliland to conduct civil and/or voter registration. The absence of an acceptable voter registry has historically been a critical weakness of and source of tension during Somaliland's electoral process, and the lack of a comprehensive civil registry has governance and service delivery implications. Some donor interviewees expressed sentiments such as, "It's clear that there's a need for voter registration to take place," and "the voter registration list continues to be a concern." Other donor interviewees looked to the development of a civil registry⁶⁹ that will double as a voter registry; if Somaliland maintains a comprehensive and continuously updated civil register, a voter list could be drawn from it in advance of each election. Support for this approach stems primarily from concerns that the amount of time remaining before Somaliland's next scheduled election is too limited to allow for the conduct of separate civil and voter registries.

Beyond identifying voter registration as a priority for Somaliland, donors and their implementing partners had mixed perspectives on the role their individual organizations should play in supporting a civil or voter registration exercise and the method for doing so. One donor, for example, explained that while "donors in general all know it's important," a civil registry is not something it is currently interested in funding given the expense of such an endeavor. Another donor cautioned against the conduct of biometric voter registration, citing prior experiences of the international community in supporting biometric registration in advance of the 2010 presidential election. Also citing the 2010 experience, one interviewee explained:

As you will have heard, parliament's mandate has been extended by two years. So now you're looking at a scenario that clearly opens up the timeframe for a registration process, let's say a civil registration process which could ultimately be used to generate voter registration in the future...we are obviously very keen to make sure that lessons don't need to be learned a second time where the old experience can be built on... There's a bit of concern that the opportunity of this period might be sliding without being utilized.

Following the 2010 and 2012 electoral processes, virtually all stakeholders set a complete and adequate voter registry as a pre-requisite for future elections. Given that parliamentary and presidential elections are quickly approaching, the international community will need to make decisions soon, in concert with the Somaliland government, as to which type of registration process to prioritize for support: a voter registry, civil registry or a civil registry that can double as a voter registry. Additionally, a determination will need to be made as to whether or not to pursue biometric registration.

⁶⁹ At the time interviews were conducted, the International Organization for Migration had recently initiated a pilot civil registration exercise. It was clear from interviews that donors prioritized the compilation of a voter registry, however it is unclear the extent to which they prioritized the conduct of civil registration independent of its potential use as a source for drawing a voter registry.

Civil Society Development

Several donors placed civil society development as a priority for future international donor support to Somaliland. While support to Somaliland civil society (particularly to organizations engaged in promoting participation in or access to democratic processes) has been a mainstay of democracy and governance programming for Somaliland to date, those who prioritized civil society development looking forward offered guidance on specific areas of focus.

The first area of focus articulated by members of the donor community was encouraging Somaliland civil society to take a more active role in the development of policy and engaging with the Somaliland government:

I think it's having a strong relationship built between civil society and the government, having a strong flow of communication, one of trust. And then, secondly, it's getting civil society organizations to break out of their comfort zone and to get more sophisticated in generating legislation and impacting, influencing policies or policy development... if we want to move [civil society development] to the next level you have to have this tough engagement on substantive issues.

Similarly, another donor representative explained:

Obviously, there is a very active civil society in Somaliland, but I think it's [important to encourage] developing that relationship between them and the governing authorities and making sure that it becomes a more natural inclusion versus an ask by donors. Again, it's kind of the supply-demand side of the house. And the same would go with any institution...how civil society feed[s] into parliament and has that become a natural relationship.

Secondly, donors discussed the need to focus on working with civil society to engage with each other and build their constituency base. Speaking about this, one donor interviewed stated:

I think that Somaliland at the moment is still kind of the briefcase civil society level, so building constituencies within organizations and legitimate constituencies, so that the organization has a sense of membership, and members feel like they have some control... You don't see a lot of alliances among the civil society sector that are well organized and that are really on point about their issues. I think that would go back to building their capacity in terms of being able to form coalitions.

Finally, donors prioritized supporting civil society organizations to fulfill watchdog functions and to encourage government accountability.

Independent Media

A majority of the donor representatives interviewed prioritized bolstering independent media in Somaliland. Rationale for this priority was explained by one donor as, "Independent media is crucial...you can't have a strong democracy without independent media. You need to have a free flow of ideas, you need to have information getting out there from various sources." Another donor stated that currently, a "weak spot" of the democratization agenda for

Somaliland is its relative lack of support of freedom of the press and expression and viewed the only prior substantive engagement on media as having been in the context of elections.

Donors interviewed offered ideas for entry points for media programming, including reform of Somaliland law as it relates to the press, support to private radio and the institutionalization of an independent regulatory body. Donor representatives stated:

I would definitely want the media to open up in Somaliland - definitely. The thing is some basic relations have to be in place first. The legislation has to be in place. There has to be a self-regulating council of some sort for the media.

And:

Probably the biggest disappointment for me is the - and probably the biggest dent on its democratic development is the lack of a broadcasting law which would then allow for independent media. While independent media is strong in Puntland and South Central, there is only the government-run radio station, and then Voice of America and BBC. And while Silanyo campaigned, one of his campaign pieces was that he would bring independent radio to Somaliland, I think one of the reasons you're seeing them backsliding in terms of their democratic development or progress is because they don't have a multiplicity of ideas out there from Somalis. And not having independent media is a very strong cornerstone of a democracy, and they don't have it.

An implementing partner also encouraged support to independent media by saying:

There's no such thing as free press [in Somaliland]...If you're going to get featured, they're going to want you to pay. Earned media, that doesn't really exist in Somaliland. So, there needs to be some work done on media. Because then what it really means is that the only information that's getting out into countryside is through the official radio station, and that is it. Unlike South Central where there is a plethora of community radio stations, there is nothing [in Somaliland]. And they really do need to work on reforming the media law to allow for community radio.

Governance

Among the donors that prioritized support to democratic governance in Somaliland, two general but interrelated themes emerged. First, donors encouraged governance support to be focused at the local level as opposed to national level governance programming with executive ministries. One donor stated, "national governance is fed by local governance...everything is local." Another donor agency representative explained:

I would put the ministries lower on the list in the hopes that more of that service delivery attention and the capacity could be focused at the local levels. I think that we, too often, put our eggs in the ministries baskets expecting service delivery and end up being disappointed, both with the capacity building and with the service delivery, and don't get anything at the local level either.

Second, donors emphasized a need to support improved service delivery, with interviewees explaining "you have to understand that citizens equate service delivery with a functioning

state, 'I need my water, I need my electricity, I need certain things,' and 'the local authorities, councils... institutions that deliver services are those that need capacity building, serious capacity building, and institutional formation and also practice of doing.'"

Implementing partners also encouraged a focus on democratic governance at the local level, particularly given the 2012 local council elections caused turnover in the district councils; "At the district level, when the new councilors come then [programming] needs to start afresh. They need to have new trainings, new capacity building because all of capacity has left." One implementing partner argued:

I think what will be quite important in practice, especially in terms of the governance, is not just talking about sort of work with civil society and talk about accountability, but really working with governments and working with them to become stronger. I think a lot of times, even civil society and donors were quite quick to criticize their government and say they have a weak capacity, they can't do this...In the last 20 years, I think has been really focused on building capacity of civil society and not so much on governance... maybe it's not really about funds and giving them so much money, [but] building their systems, building their structures, having experts there that come work with them, exposing them to other systems and how they can work to become more effective. Even exposure if it's through other - I don't know - ways that they can work and ways that they can be more effective and accountable to people and so on. We place a lot of this on the civil society, so I think I've seen exposure visits for civil society. I've seen numerous training for civil society. I don't know if there is, but I haven't seen so much for government.

Civic and Voter Education

A few donor representatives raised support to civic and voter education as a priority and an emphasis was placed on pursuing alternate means of conducting civic education than has been done in the past. Two donor interviewees proposed that basic civic education be "institutionalized in the educational curriculum," as it is not taught in Somaliland schools. These donors explained that assistance could be provided to develop the civic education curriculum that would be taught to young Somalilanders by their primary and/or secondary school teachers. Two implementing partners also suggested this approach, with one explaining that this methodology has been recently utilized in Puntland where a teacher's guide was developed. The other implementing partner explained:

[Civic education is] usually done during the time of elections which is quite short. So they would say the election is going to be in November, maybe a month or two before. And then all the civic education is done during that period. What we're thinking is maybe to do more concrete civic education on curriculum maybe throughout the year. Then you have it in primary education or in secondary school, something like that, so people are aware of these things, their rights and so on from an early age in education.

Finally, a donor prioritized supporting civic education for rural communities as opposed to urban areas, which have been the target of previous civic education initiatives for "a decade or more now."

Parliament

A priority area for future democracy and governance assistance to Somaliland raised by a few donor representatives interviewed was support to the Somaliland parliament, including capacity development for members of parliament in the areas of policy/legislation development and executive oversight. A representative from one donor agency explained:

I think having institutions function in a more professional and efficient manner, like continuing to build up the capacity of the parliament...that can be more transparent and accountable and strengthening those oversight functions is also really critical. You know, one of the major drivers of instability in all of Somalia has been the lack of transparency and accountability, a sense of corruption, a sense of impunity, so those parts of the democratic system that can be strengthened to start to build people's faith in these institutions again, I think it has a whole array of ramifications.

In also encouraging parliamentary support programs, one implementing partner explained:

I do think that more work does need to be done with the legislative branch as well because they are so -- and I think we see this in lots of countries: Donors don't want to come in and work with politicians; they'd rather come in and work with ministries. And so, assistance is so heavily weighted on the side of the executive, that there's sort of no point in having a legislative branch, and that's a problem. And so, I do think more resources need to be given to the legislative branch, again, because they should be representing what the views are of their constituencies outside of Hargeisa and that's not -- there is no support for that. So, yes, voices outside just aren't getting heard.

Finally, an implementing partner encouraged that support to the Somaliland parliament be directed at members of parliament rather than parliamentary staff as:

The assistance that parliament has been getting has been, perhaps, overly focused on working with parliamentary staff. And although you think that that might build the capacity of the institution, I can appreciate why you want to work with staff as opposed to members of parliament at times, but the problem is because staff is so poorly paid, there's a lot of turnover among staff...I think traditional programming of parliament has overly focused on training staff who then leave and go somewhere else.

Harmonized Elections

Some donors, despite wanting to broaden the focus of democracy and governance support to Somaliland beyond elections, included as a priority the need to encourage Somaliland to hold harmonized elections. Donors, as well as the implementing partners, attributed many of the challenges faced by Somaliland in holding timely elections to the existing electoral calendar. For example, one interviewee explained:

They have got to reform their electoral calendar. They cannot keep having elections every two or three years. It's just not sustainable. It is way too expensive...at the very minimum, you can harmonize presidential and

parliamentary elections. They're [currently] staggered and everything just keeps getting delayed and it just gets so expensive...so they really need to do some serious thinking and work on the electoral reform.

Interviewees also explained that harmonizing elections will allow for the costs associated with holding elections to be reduced, especially as the Somaliland government has struggled to fund electoral processes to date and has looked to the international community for assistance. This will allow for a longer period between elections. In turn, this will allow both Somaliland stakeholders and the international donor community with the opportunity to dedicate time and resources to support other, non-election related, democracy and governance initiatives; "elections are so frequent that there is no time for actual governing – everyone is always completely focused on elections." According to interviewees:

I think it's our feeling that having an election practically every year or year and a half in Somaliland is not useful because it detracts attention from governing the country... What we would have [with harmonized elections] is a normal election cycle where, yes, we're all gearing up a bit because it's a busier time but it doesn't have to go into these peaks and valleys.

and:

What we have been pushing for a long time is the need to consolidate the electoral process in Somaliland. Not to just run from one election to the other and always fix the problems and the challenges in the short term when tensions arise or delays occur [but] come to a more regulated electoral cycle that is affordable, economically affordable but also politically. Politically in the sense, that if you have an election every two years, politics become focused entirely on that only... there has to be a time without elections where someone can govern and actually do something with this mandate.

Political Party Development

One of the areas that the implementing partners interviewed prioritized for international donor support more frequently than the donors themselves, was political party development. Implementing partners particularly focused on the need to strengthen the political parties' ability to fulfill their role between elections as representatives of Somaliland citizens and, for the parties not in power, to serve as an effective opposition. One implementing partner interviewed stated:

Parties are the best way to make sure that concerns [of ordinary citizens] that are not in Hargeisa are going to get heard at the national level. So, if you have a strong party system that is present all over the country, then hopefully those messages and priorities can get filtered up to the national level. Because as the way it is now, decisions are simply made by an elite, without really thinking or understanding what the priorities need to be based on what people want...Parties are the best avenue you can have to have local opinion represented at a national level.

Others explained, “Somalilanders understand how to use a party to get elected, but they don’t really know what to do with the party between the election cycle and why it’s important and why it’s valuable” and “if the opposition or every party has its own strategy, its own internal democratic systems, it could hold their leaders accountable.” Finally, representatives of implementing partners and a donor, separately, encouraged the continuance of traditional political party organizational capacity building support. For example, one interviewee stated, “the political parties are also not having the training they need. They don’t have the basics like [fundraising] and membership.” While another explained that it is important to make sure to get “out into the countryside to train parties and try to reinforce or make sure party structures exist outside of Hargeisa, because they get set up for elections and then they disappear, and everything’s in Hargeisa.”

CIVIL SOCIETY

Overview

Contemporary understanding of civil society is a relatively new phenomenon in Somaliland. During the years of military rule between 1969 and 1991, civil society was viewed with suspicion and mistrust; outside of support to refugees displaced by fighting between Somalia and Ethiopia in the late 1970s, the ability of civil society to play a meaningful role remained limited. These limitations were painfully underscored in the early 1980s, when a group of citizens formed a self-help organization with the aim of rehabilitating a hospital. Naming themselves *Uffo* (Breeze), the group's actions angered the authorities, who subsequently arrested most of the group's members. In February 1982, these detainees were sentenced to long prison terms by a military court, triggering large protests in Hargeisa and other towns. Violent confrontations between security forces and civilians resulted in arrests, curfews, road closures, and other punitive actions.⁷⁰

Following the collapse of the Barre regime in 1991, civil society organizations⁷¹ began to emerge to meet basic citizen needs that the new government could not yet fulfill, whether due to the government's inability to receive aid due to lack of recognition, or because of its lack of capacity. Civil society organizations therefore became natural partners to international organizations in their efforts to provide both initial humanitarian aid and later development assistance, ranging from emergency support to ongoing health and education efforts. Internationally supported civil society organizations such as the Academy for Peace and Development also emerged to play key roles in conducting research, organizing public debate and addressing issues such as land-based conflicts and decentralization.

Over the years, civil society activism has “swelled and ebbed,” depending, in part, “on the tolerance levels of the incumbent government and the leeway it is prepared to give to civil society.” The closure of the human-rights organization Shuronet in 2007 heralded a period of tension between the two sectors and since 2009, the space for civil society has begun to grow again.⁷² Perceptions of civil society organizations have fluctuated as well, with many often viewed as “‘briefcase organizations’ that exist only by name.” Clan affiliation has also posed an obstacle at times, with regard to issues ranging from staffing to service delivery to image.⁷³

⁷⁰ Omaar, Rakiya. *Seizing the Moment: A Case Study on Conflict and Peacemaking in Somaliland*. Publication. 3rd ed. N.p.: Future Generations Graduate School, 2010. Print. Peace Building Ser.

⁷¹ This document uses the more neutral/inclusive term “civil society organization,” while also recognizing that the term “non-governmental organization” (NGO) is often used interchangeably. Official Somaliland documents use the term NGO, defined by the 2010 NGO Act as a “voluntary group of individuals and associations that are non-partisan, impartial and not operated for profit. They can be of international, national, regional, district or at village level (community-based organization) whose sole objective is to best serve their members and the community in improving social services, emergency humanitarian issues, environment conservation and preservation of natural resources, good governance, protection of human rights and the promotion of social welfare and community livelihoods as well as the introduction of intellectually/vocationally uplifting trainings and the maintenance of sustainable development.”

⁷² Mohamed Fadal, Social Research and Development Institute, “Somaliland Elections: A Growing Ownership and Experience,” *Somaliland: Facing the Challenges of Free and Fair Elections*.

⁷³ *Democracy in Somaliland: Challenges and Opportunities*. Rep. Hargeysa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2010. Print.

Within the field of democratization, today's leading civil society organizations identify diverse priorities for Somaliland, including the justice system, peace, youth employment, women's empowerment and free elections. Some of these issues clearly overlap; for example, youth employment – given estimates of an estimated 70 percent youth population – is seen as a key to peace, while women's empowerment is a vital component of free elections. Civil society's role in Somaliland's successful elections – including civic education, election monitoring and advocacy toward legislative changes – has received much attention and been widely praised by the international community. The sector now must transfer its skills to other areas and focus on other concerns. As a 2010 study suggests:

In the past few years an increasing disconnect between public and national institutions has seen the space for civil society reduced and leadership become more autocratic and unaccountable. This has hampered national development in Somaliland. Hence, there is a need to reverse this trend by creating the opportunities that will enhance people's participation in public affairs; build credible national institutions; and sanction the behavior of those with political or administrative authority so that they recognize that they are answerable to citizens.⁷⁴

Despite civil society's predominant role, there has been no systematic study of the sector in Somaliland; at best, civil society receives a few lines of discussion within the treatment of other topics, leaving an analytical vacuum in more fully understanding the sector's breadth and depth. The tendency to view civil society as implementers of particular programs or conduits for specific goals has created a stovepipe effect that obscures the ability to see civil society as a separate sector – rather than an add-on to other sectors – and blurs the development of a common identity or vision.

A focus on reoccurring international partners based in Hargeisa further inhibits a more diverse and inclusive perspective, including the role to be played by rural organizations, informal groups, and faith-based initiatives.⁷⁵ The Academy for Peace and Development mapping exercises on decentralization, for example, have uncovered the difficulty of finding local organizations who can work on local government affairs. Civil society organizations in eastern areas of Somaliland may face particular difficulties in their development. These barriers include limited access to funding, perceptions of security concerns, conflicts over limited resources, and the migration of human capital to Hargeisa and other areas.

Similarly, a somewhat arbitrary separation between organizations engaged in democratization issues from those active in service provision risks neglecting that service provision is a key function of governance, and that the interests of citizens – which civil society organizations

⁷⁴ Haroon, Yusuf. "Somaliland's Political Culture: Challenges to Democracy." *Somaliland: Facing the Challenges of Free and Fair Elections*. Hargeisa: Social Research and Development Institute, 2010. 16-21. Print.

⁷⁵ According to the Academy for Peace and Development: "Many of the existing organizations or bodies outside the government framework are categorized as community based organizations, Islamic relief organizations and cooperatives of different kinds. These bodies are engaged in one form of service or another. The Islamic organizations are engaged in the provision of relief, construction of religious schools and maintenance of mosques. Local NGOs are mostly involved in developmental issues and relief distribution."

should ideally represent – are often daily, on-the-ground issues, rather than more profound theoretical concepts. In some senses, citizens do not appear to be at the forefront of civil society organization democratization efforts, which seem to be more focused on the government and the international community, rather than on beneficiaries or constituents.⁷⁶

Legal Context and Background

Until recently, Somaliland civil society operated without a clear legal basis.⁷⁷ In 1994, the Ministry of Interior proposed a draft law that was considered hostile to the sector, and the draft was withdrawn following civil society opposition. As the sector continued to grow in size and importance – receiving both significant resources relative to other sectors in Somaliland and serving as a major employer – so did scrutiny of the need for regulation. In October 2010, the *Somaliland Non-Governmental Organizations Act* (“the NGO Act,” No: 43/2010) was approved by parliament, and soon after was signed by the president via *Presidential Degree No: 0082/112010*.

The NGO Act sets forth the following specific purposes:⁷⁸

1. To encourage NGOs to participate in the development of the country.
2. To confer legal personality for NGOs as legally constituted organizations.
3. To coordinate NGO activities so that they align with the *National Development Plan*.
4. To encourage the capacity and independence of community-based organizations.
5. To improve NGO accountability and transparency.

While the NGO Act has been generally well-received, some provisions have been met with concern among certain stakeholders, particularly with regard to international organizations. These include Article 35,⁷⁹ under which an international organization may not become an implementing partner of another international organization or UN agency, unless no national partners can fill the required capacity, and Article 36, which stipulates that dissolved or terminated organizations transfer their assets to the Ministry of National Planning and Development. The government of Somaliland has acknowledged such concerns directly,

⁷⁶ This sentiment has been echoed in relation to the Academy for Peace and Development’s lessons learned from election support: “Despite the involvement of certain organizations and individuals in the electoral process in different capacities, these civic organizations lacked the power to put pressure on the parties to adhere to the terms of the agreement or face off pressure from the government and other groups. One explanation might be that civic organizations tend to be outward looking instead of inward looking, meaning that they are more accountable and connected to their donors than the locals they claim to represent.”

⁷⁷ The Somaliland constitution guarantees the rights to association, assembly, expression and press.

⁷⁸ Somaliland Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Law, No. 43/2010, Republic of Somaliland (2010). Online. <http://www.somalilandlaw.com/somaliland_ngos_law.html>.

⁷⁹ According to Article 35, “1. International NGOs must encourage investment in national NGOs and should avoid open competition with them for activities that they can implement competently to strengthen the capacity of national NGOs for quality service delivery; 2. The programs of international NGOs shall be aligned with the *National Development Plan* of the Country. International NGOs should encourage and develop tangible achievements while supporting national NGOs in improving and building upon existing strengths in order to attain continuance and sustainability; 3. International NGOs shall not become implementers for other international NGOs and UN organizations working in the country.”

including references in the *National Development Plan* and in the bylaws that accompany the NGO Act,⁸⁰ but has concluded that an amendment to the law would be premature.⁸¹

Actors

The NGO Act empowers the Ministry of National Planning and Development as the leading authority in civil society affairs and provides for the appointment of a registrar general to oversee implementation of the NGO Act and the nomination of a consultative committee to guide policy. In addition, Article 22 seeks to establish a “forum for national/local non-governmental organizations” that would be “a focal point and common platform for all local NGOs operating in Somaliland with the aim of achieving better coordination and networking among these organizations.” These mechanisms remain under formation. A four-tiered coordination structure includes monthly sector coordination forums, quarterly inter-sector coordination forums, quarterly national aid coordination forums, and bi-annual high-level coordination forums.

According to the *National Development Plan*, close to 1,800 local organizations have registered with the Ministry of National Planning and Development since the 1990s.⁸² As of 2012, 427 organizations were registered, with the following breakdown among their main areas of activity:⁸³

Activity	Percentage
Development	31.87
Education	19.02
Health	11.56
Livelihood	11.08
Environment	5.41
Production (agriculture, livestock, fisheries)	4.88
Youth	4.38
Governance	2.05
Water and Sanitation	1.28
Others	1.54

Prominent local partners focusing on democratization issues include the Academy for Peace and Development, the Social Research and Development Institute, the Forum for Peace and Development, and the Candlelight for Health Education and Environment. In addition to individual civil society organizations, a number of umbrella groups bring together related organizations towards the promotion of common interests. These include the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum, which represents approximately 40 civil society organizations, professional communities, and private businesses; Nagaad, which represents approximately 45 women’s

⁸⁰ <http://slministryofplanning.org/images/ngo-by-laws-of-ngo-law.pdf>.

⁸¹ Hamdi Abdulahi, “Research Assessment of the Legal Framework for Civil Society in Somaliland and Puntland,” International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, June 2011.

⁸² The NGO Act continues to leave some vagueness as to organizations operating outside of its scope, such as grassroots or faith-based groups.

⁸³ Based on data from the Somaliland *National Development Plan*, p. 251.

organizations; and the Somaliland National Youth Umbrella, which has particularly focused on youth participation. Many of these organizations grew out of donor efforts, rather than from fully indigenous impetus. The Academy for Peace and Development was established in cooperation with Interpeace, for example, while the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum grew out of European Union-funded efforts by Saferworld to encourage structures capable of engaging in policy dialogue.

Resources

International organizations continue to play a disproportionate role in funding civil society, while also coming under increasing criticism for the ways in which they distribute their funds. As expressed by the Minister of National Planning and Development:

One of the main problems with aid at the present time is the long route it takes – the number of hands and accounts it goes through and the high administrative cost that this entails. We estimate that for every dollar donated no more than 20 cents are actually spent on the ground. The total aid figure for Somaliland in 2009, excluding humanitarian aid, was \$83 million – about double the government’s revenue for the year. That is a huge amount by our standards, but you do not see its trail on the ground. Where has the money gone?...A good deal has been spent to cover administrative, financial, logistics and security costs. The rest has been spent mainly on consumables and so-called capacity building projects in the form of one to three day seminars and workshops.⁸⁴

In its section on civil society, the *National Development Plan* provides the following data⁸⁵ on development aid disbursed by sector in 2009, suggesting, though not clearly explaining, that the balance between allocations has been inappropriate.

Sector	Amount (USD)	Percentage
Health	26,000,000	31.2
Livelihoods	21,100,000	25.3
Education	18,100,000	21.7
Governance	9,000,000	10.8
Water/Sanitation	7,000,000	8.4
Private	1,600,000	1.9
Infrastructure	500,000	0.6
Total	83,300,000	100

As expressed in the plan:

While governance, education and health are important, equally important, if not more so are production, infrastructure and the environment. But production and environment do not feature in the table and infrastructure is allocated a mere

⁸⁴ Africa Research Institute, *AFTER BORAMA: Consensus, representation and parliament in Somaliland*.

⁸⁵ *National Development Plan*, p. 240. A more comprehensive discussion can be found in the *Somaliland 2009 Annual Aid Report*, available at http://slministryofplanning.org/images/stories/pdf/aid_effectiveness.pdf.

0.6% of the total disbursed. The challenge is bringing aid in line with national priorities and needs. The *National Development Plan* is expected to provide the guidance needed for alignment.⁸⁶

The NGO Act does not place any legal limits on the financing of civil society; despite increasing suspicion towards international donors, there are no restrictions on or requirements for receiving foreign grants.

The NGO Act also provides for other sources of revenue, including income generation (as allowed under Article 26); anecdotal evidence suggests that some organizations do charge for services or otherwise run related business-like activities, such as small-scale production that may benefit both organizational sustainability as well as targeted beneficiaries. Other forms of fundraising do take place, but remain embryonic, including business contributions and individual philanthropy.⁸⁷ While there do not appear to be any incentives for businesses or individuals to contribute to civil society organizations, the income tax law does exempt charitable and welfare institutions from income tax as well as from custom duties for office and project equipment.

In addition, Article 28 of the NGO Act calls for the establishment of an NGO fund, to be supported by the government, donors and the private sector, to strengthen service delivery among local NGOs. Its current status – including specific sources of support, criteria for selection, and mechanisms for transparency – remains unclear.

Alliances and Strategies

Separate from the *National Development Plan*, there is no official strategy – advocated by civil society, the government, or international donors – that specifically addresses the development of the sector. The absence of such a strategy inhibits understanding of the role of civil society and the concrete steps that could be taken to ensure the sector's strength and sustainability. The key priorities articulated by the *National Development Plan* include:

- Implementing the NGO Act;
- Increasing coordination between NGOs and the government;
- Ensuring alignment between national priorities and international programs;
- Expanding sustainable sources for NGO financing;
- Building the capacity of local NGOs; and
- Conducting regular monitoring and evaluation.

As a cross-cutting actor, civil society continues to play a key role in the development of other sectors, including youth, education and health, both in advocating for certain policies and in delivering specific services. Civil society is particularly credited with putting gender equality

⁸⁶ *National Development Plan*, p. 241.

⁸⁷ At this stage, community-based organizations – both closer to the public and farther removed from international donors – may be more likely to receive these alternative forms of support.

and women's empowerment on the public agenda,⁸⁸ although many women's organizations lament that substantial progress remains to be seen, particularly with regard to political participation. Civil society has also played an active role in ensuring free and fair elections, including the establishment of the Somaliland Civil Society Election Forum, which aimed to provide a mechanism through which civil society could conduct oversight and advocacy during the 2012 elections. The youth umbrella, the Somaliland National Youth Organization, also achieved particular success with its advocacy campaign to reduce the minimum age to serve as a candidate for local council, from 35 to 25.

Though generally positive at the moment, civil society's relationship with the government continues to face some tensions. Some of this tension stems from the greater allocation of donor resources to civil society rather than to the government – whether due to restrictions on providing assistance to an unrecognized government authority or because, in previous years, civil society was seen to have stronger capacity than official institutions – combined with the government's belief, referenced above, that these resources have not been spent effectively or responsibly. Other actors may believe that civil society has “taken” their work from them, particularly with regard to the traditional peace building role of the *Guurti* and the role that some civil society organizations have played in this area. It is unclear to what degree civil society is cooperating with what would otherwise be clear institutional partners, such as the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission.

Though in other contexts the media is often considered part of civil society, in Somaliland there is little cooperation or solidarity between the two. Civil society has generally not taken up media-related causes – such as attacks on journalists – and the media do not appear to provide much coverage of the work of civil society. Outside of the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum, civil society's relationships with other non-state actors – such as the business community and academia – also appear weak, though not necessarily negative. In a positive direction, civil society does appear to take great interest in strengthening the system for higher education. The diaspora is seen by Somaliland civil society as a “double-edged sword,” with mixed appreciation for the knowledge it brings, but some mistrust as outsiders who interfere. Problematically, civil society's ties to the public at large seem strangely absent.

Future Considerations

With the NGO Act in the early stages of implementation, it is too early to evaluate how its interpretation and operation may unfold. The current focus on expectations for international organizations to align themselves with government priorities obscures the possibility that similar expectations may extend to local organizations as well. Experience in other countries suggests this could present particular challenges for organizations with an advocacy or watchdog agenda that may be seen as too critical of the government. Independent oversight of implementation of the act may help ensure that its registration, funding, coordination and reporting mechanisms do not become a future means of control. The medium-level priority given to governance in the *National Development Plan* – and the lack of an explicit role for

⁸⁸ See, for example, Ahmed Abdi Jama, “Level of Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment in Somaliland,” in *Reflections and Lessons of Somaliland's Two Decades of Sustained Peace, State Building and Democratization*.

civil society in achieving the plan's goals in this area – may also present some challenges for organizations pursuing a focus on democratization.

Elections have played an important role in the stabilization of Somaliland, and Somaliland takes great pride in having completed a succession of them successfully (using this success as one of the arguments for international recognition of an independent Somaliland). While support for civil society's role in future elections remains important, some donors now validly suggest that the time has come to move past this narrow focus to concentrate on issues of actual governance, including accountability. The visibility of other issues, such as the rising rate of rape,⁸⁹ suggests there are far wider areas in which civil society may have a key role to play.

The overwhelming focus on international recognition could potentially backfire if expectations fail to be met. Somaliland's continuing mantra emphasizes its achievements (more than its challenges), particularly vis-à-vis other parts of Somalia; if these achievements are not seen to be rewarded, stakeholders may lose faith in the benefits of pursuing a peaceful and democratic path. The attention of the international community may be shifting to South Central Somalia and that may leave many Somaliland stakeholders feeling marginalized. Civil society organizations lamented their inability to attend related international conferences, stemming in part from the government ban on joining any initiative that does not allow Somaliland stakeholders to participate separate from Somalia. In May 2013, close to 200 organizations and institutions, including the most commonly donor-funded civil society organizations, issued a joint statement expressing this frustration, stating that “the Somaliland pro-democratic movements, human rights and civil society groups would like to make it known to the international community that we will no longer tolerate to deal Somaliland as a part of war torn country of Somalia.”⁹⁰

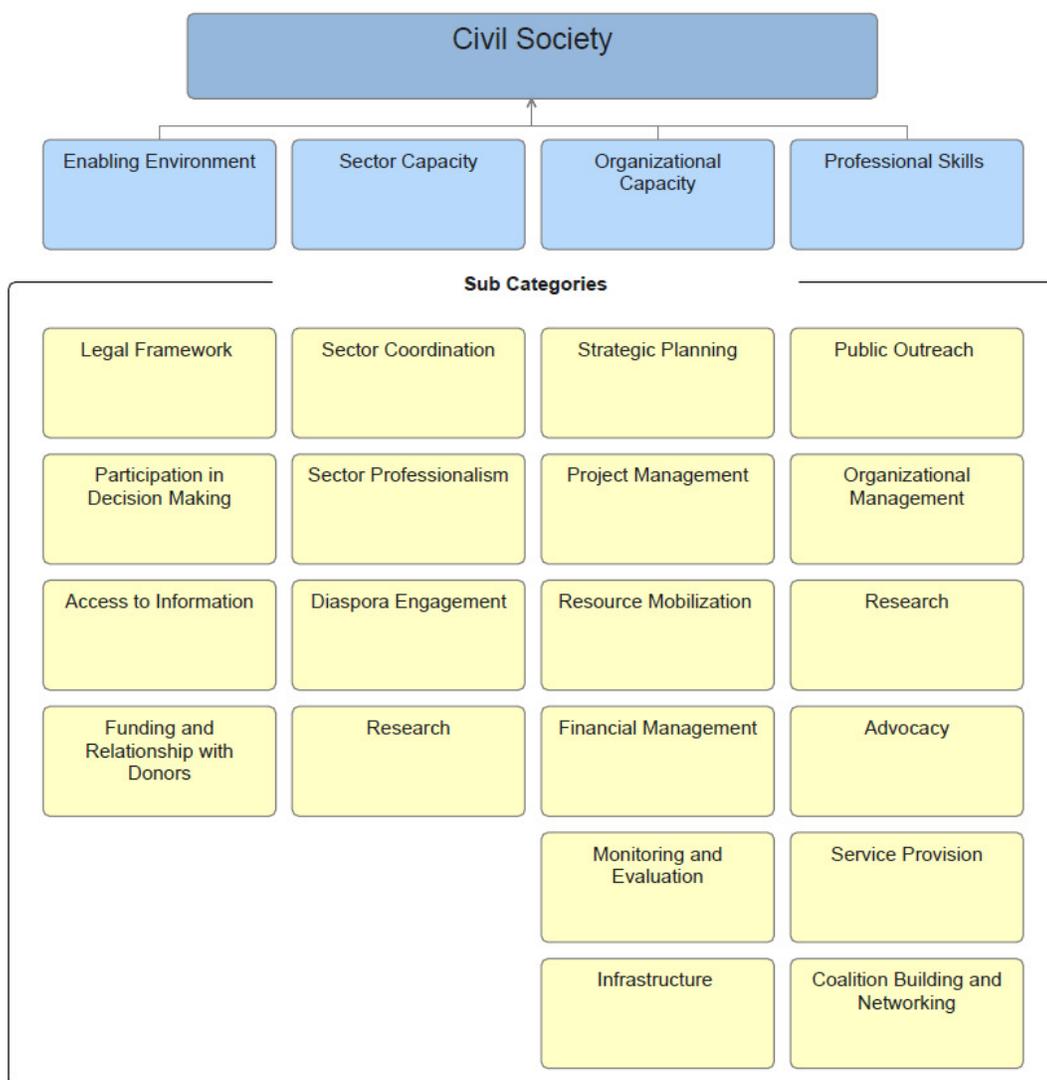
Somaliland Strategy Analysis Framework: Civil Society

For the purposes of this democratization strategy, analysis of civil society interests, needs and priorities took place within a framework developed especially for this assessment. The framework sought to view civil society through four basic lenses: the overarching environment in which the sector operates; commonalities shared within the sector, across organizations; issues that relate to specific, individual organizations; and needs of the individuals that comprise them. The initial framework was developed through discussions with the assessment team, and aimed to mirror the categories developed for each sector. The final categories, including the addition of sub-categories, were adjusted during the workshop held with civil society stakeholders to meld with their perspectives and perceived challenges.

A graphical representation of the Somaliland civil society framework is shown below:

⁸⁹ "Stiffer Penalties, Formal Justice to Curb Rape in Somaliland." *IRIN*. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 28 May 2013. Web. <<http://www.irinnews.org/report/98116/stiffer-penalties-formal-justice-to-curb-rape-in-somaliland>>.

⁹⁰ "Somaliland Pro-Democratic Movements Petition." *Somaliland Sun*. N.p., 17 May 2013. Web. <<http://somalilandsun.com/index.php/community/2932-somaliland-pro-democratic-movements-p-e-t-i-o-n>>.



This framework includes relative categories and sub-categories of civil society activities, interests and influences, both real and potential in the case of Somaliland. Many of these were not addressed by Somalilanders in interviews or workshops due to lack of time, knowledge, or perceived prioritization on the part of Somalilander participants, but may nonetheless be helpful to identify possible next steps, priorities, and overlap with donor interests.

The top level boxes in light blue identify major categories of civil society influences and internal and external roles and responsibilities. The lower level boxes in yellow identify sub-categories of civil society influences (such as advocacy) and roles and responsibilities related to each of the major categories. These are general headings and as such comprise a number of different civil society influences and activities.

Civil society priorities discussed in the following section are organized by these categories and subcategories. Some subcategories are not discussed; those that are not discussed were not mentioned either at all or to a significant degree by workshop participants or interviewees.

Civil Society Priorities for Democratization

Representatives of Somaliland civil society – drawn primarily from Hargeisa-based organizations engaged in encouraging Somaliland’s democratic development, advocating on behalf of/representing marginalized constituencies or promoting peaceful political participation – participated in a strategy workshop on April 29, 2013, to inform the development of this strategy for international democratization support to Somaliland. In the workshop, participants collectively identified the following as their vision for civil society in Somaliland:

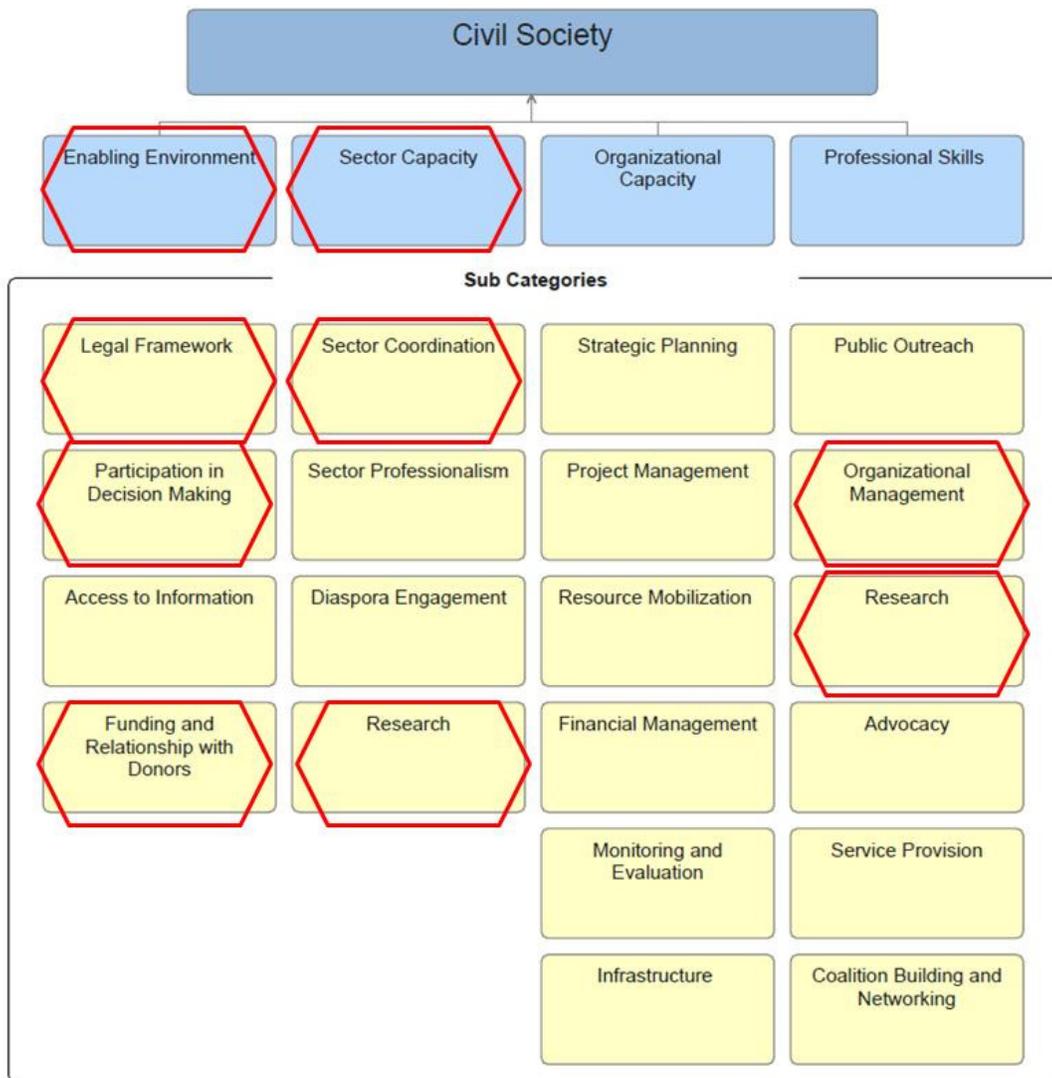
An independent and sustainable civil society with the capacity to engage and effectively represent the citizens of Somaliland and participate in decision making in a well-coordinated, professional and ethical way.

The participatory workshops conducted as part of this assessment aimed to discuss civil society needs and priorities, as they contribute to the achievement of their articulated vision, through four separate prisms representing different levels of organization and composition:

- 1) Enabling environment: which provides the overall conditions under which civil society operates;
- 2) Sector capacity:⁹¹ which addresses issues that cut across civil society as a sector, but that remain internal to it;
- 3) Organizational capacity: which focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of individual organizations; and
- 4) Professional skills: which targets the individual members of organizations.

Civil society participants, through interviews, strategy workshop outputs and discussions, prioritized different subcategories of civil society influences, roles and responsibilities. The prioritized subcategories are highlighted below with red boxes:

⁹¹ This category was added over the course of the workshop, to capture elements that did not fit into existing categories. An earlier category of internal organization was then merged with organizational capacity.



Note that subcategories that are not highlighted as high priorities may have been listed as medium priority or low priority, or may not have been mentioned at all by participants. The following section describes the high, medium and low priorities raised by civil society within each of these categories in further detail.

In reflecting on their choices, outlined below, participants in the civil society participatory strategy workshop noted that the four sector categories were necessarily interrelated and dependent on each other. One participant explained, “the foundation or the building blocks of the organization is the individuals, so individuals with professional skills make up an organization with the capacity and then the sector with the capacity. Put all of those together we create an enabling environment for everyone.” With this caveat in mind, participants expressed the following priorities for democratization assistance:

Enabling Environment – High Priority

Of the four categories discussed with civil society representatives present in the participatory strategy workshop, participants identified the enabling environment as the area most important for civil society's ability to fulfill its function as a democratic institution. One participant explained "The environment is very important. We did some improvement over the level we were 10 years ago. Now our vision and how to reach that vision also needs the environment to be viable for us to work." In the workshop, participants subsequently highlighted key factors related to the enabling environment for civil society that, if changed, could best improve civil society's operating conditions. Top priorities for change included: the "legal framework for women to have access to political participation," the "parent-child relationship between donors and civil society," and the "national legal framework" and "rule of law."

Participation in Decision Making/Legal Framework

Civil society workshop participants identified the legal framework for women's political participation as the top priority for change.⁹² Considerable discussion of this issue ensued during the participatory strategy workshop. One (female) participant explained that, despite all of the capacity assistance that Somaliland women receive to encourage their participation in politics:

Seventeen years we are working the women issue, and after 17 years there is no more change. Whether we are working to developing, whether we are working to capacitating women and all these programs. When we talk to the women issue, there is many problems we are facing, and I'm believing that we are focusing on enabling environment because after 17 years there is no change.

Participants pointed to having only a single female member within the 82 member Somaliland parliament, and the traditional Somali cultural attitude toward women's empowerment, as key challenges. Participants referenced the initiative of civil society to advocate for quotas for parliamentary representation of women and other minority groups, which failed passage by the Somaliland parliament in 2012⁹³ (though a similar initiative by youth activists, led notably by the Somaliland National Youth Organization, to reduce the age of candidacy from 35 to 25 for the 2012 local elections was successful). Other participants explained, "Ninety-eight or 99 percent of Somali men are not in the position to allow a woman to govern." Of a different but related nature, a female participant pointed to a lack of understanding among judges of the rights of women in Islam, noting how this prohibits the advancement of women in Somaliland and thus frustrates her work as a member of civil society.

⁹² During the participatory session, workshop facilitators observed considerable lobbying by the female participants for their male counterparts to identify the legal framework for women's participation as their highest priority for change within the enabling environment category. Consequently, it is possible that the top ranking of this sub-category may not sufficiently represent the consensus of the group – although it does underscore the importance of this issue among the participants advocating for its prioritization, and their increasing exasperation at failing to achieve more substantial gains in this area.

⁹³ Dahir, Barkhad. "Somaliland Lawmakers Oppose Parliament Quota for Women and Minorities." *Hawo Tako*. N.p., 6 Sept. 2012. Web. <<http://www.hawotako.com/2012/09/somaliland-lawmakers-oppose-parliament.html>>.

Legal Framework

In identifying the legal framework as a priority challenge in need of attention, participants cited the Ministry of Planning's "lack of capacity to [en]force the [NGO] Act" as a barrier to change, particularly noting Article 35 (which stipulates, *inter alia*, that international organizations should not be implementing partners of other international agencies) and Article 37 (regarding the payment of taxes by international organizations to the Ministry of Finance). According to one participant:

Before we were civil society but no legal pieces. But now we have the legal pieces and can proceed. And that legal says that international organizations should support the local to capacitate and to implement through the local organizations. So, that discussion is going on. Still the international organizations and the UN, they are still implementing, but the law passed in parliament.

That participants focused solely on these articles demonstrates the degree of agreement between civil society and the government that the main purpose of regulating the sector is to control the behavior of international organizations. While participants noted a lack of public awareness of the act as an additional challenge, they did not discuss any of its other provisions, including their own rights and responsibilities under the law.

Funding and Relationship with Donors

Participants identified the need to change the "parent-child relationship between donors and civil society" as a high-level priority. Similar changes identified by participants included the desire to "change the traditional relationship between civil society organizations and international partners" and "to change some negative perception [held by] international organizations of civil society organizations," reflecting a general dissatisfaction with the current state of the partnership that exists between civil society organizations and the international donor/NGO community. Conversations regarding donors cited, for example, their tendency to provide short-term, project-based funding, rather than longer-term, core support. As one participant noted, "Whenever you see a project going on, it stops for lack of funds. The people who have been trained to implement the project or whatever, they go to other places for chance of work because there is no continuation of funds." Participants explained that, at this point, Somaliland civil society organizations are working to address issues in Somaliland that do not have short-term solutions. Six-month to one-year programs do not provide civil society organizations with enough time to achieve their vision or the results they desire; to do so will require a strategic partnership between civil society and international partners and support for three to five year core programs. Some participants also indicated that donors/international NGOs implement programs without "understanding the essence [of Somaliland] civil society."

Sector Capacity – Medium Priority

Sector Coordination

Workshop participants rated sector capacity as their second priority, primarily focusing on the need to improve coordination among civil society organizations. According to one participant, for example, existing umbrellas continue to act as individual organizations, rather than collaborating with other groups. This tendency was reflected in the areas of focus participants identified during the workshop – research, women's empowerment, etc. – which represented

specific spheres of interest, rather than a common vision for the sector. Furthermore, though some of the participating organizations serve as umbrellas, there was little to no discussion of their members, and the different needs and challenges of organizations that may be smaller, operating in other areas of Somaliland, have less access to donors and the government, etc. There was some limited mention of a wider sense of civil society – to include academia (in particular) as well as media and the business community/private sector – but little to no discussion of the role of grassroots or faith-based organizations, and limited discussion of service provision. The importance of sharing both information and resources emerged as one technique towards improving coordination, with the particular example of how women’s organizations could be more effective if they worked together. A similar sentiment was echoed in stakeholder interviews as well. As one respondent noted, “civil society organizations are scattered and not organized. Everyone is just looking for some funding for a certain project. So, they have little or not much influence on the policies of the government because they are not united.”

Research

Within the category of sector capacity (but also cutting across others, such as professional skills), participants prioritized research, particularly feasibility studies and needs assessments to determine which development projects to implement that will see results. “Through research, a lot of things [will] be discovered... project management is the fulfillment of the feasibility studies, and the project cycle and all the things that are contained in the project and the evaluation and the monetary assessment are also based on this.”

Professional Skills – Medium Priority

The category of professional skills came in third in importance among participants. Those that still rated this category highly did so believing that individuals form the building blocks of an organization, and that their capacity in return contributes to capacity at the organizational and sectoral levels. Within this category, participants rated organizational management and research skills as the top priorities. Medium priorities within this category included “professional education and well-trained human resources” (again focused on the higher-education system), community development, fundraising, advocacy, policy, project appraisal, conflict management and project planning and management. Within this discussion, participants referred many times to the myriad of training programs that have been provided to date as “overdone.” According to one, “we have seen so many job skills trainings and short-term media trainings, and they were never as effective as they were intended to.” Overall, the wider subject of education repeatedly arose, particularly with regard to the poor quality of universities and lecturers.

Organizational Capacity – Low Priority

Among the four categories, participants rated organizational capacity as their lowest priority for assistance. Notably, there was little discussion of the individual subcategories suggested under this category. Discussion on topics that are associated with organizational capacity – such as organizational management and development – were instead discussed under professional skills; while others, such as resource mobilization, were seen as more of a sectoral issue.

Instead, participants expressed fatigue from 20 years of emphasis on capacity building, while others believed that basic capacity has now been built, and that the time has come to focus on other issues: “Let’s be clear about capacity building; we don’t need typical capacity building.

We need real capacity building. That word has been used for a very long time and it has never been so effective. It doesn't help the citizens at all." Stakeholder interviews further confirmed low interest in capacity building, with all respondents believing their own organizations functioned sufficiently well. Only some acknowledged different needs among different organizations, between older and newer, for example, and that capacity should be tailored according to these different needs. Among both workshop participants and stakeholder interviews, respondents linked discussion of organizational capacity back to wider conversations regarding donors, including issues of financial independence and local ownership. Many considered the capacity of international organizations to be low themselves, and dismissed the attitude of international organizations as a reluctance to work themselves out of a job: "I believe that if international organizations build the local capacity, then they will lose their work...So, to make my work sustainable, I have to put you down and say he/she is weak, does not have the capacity."

Priority Opportunities for International Support

Although participations articulated their vision of the sector as "an independent and sustainable civil society with the capacity to engage and effectively represent the citizens of Somaliland and participate in decision making in a well-coordinated, professional and ethical way," a number of these aspects were not raised over the course of the workshop. Most significantly, participants did not discuss the importance of representing citizens, what kind of barriers they may face in doing so, or what kind of changes they must undergo in their work in order to do so more effectively. Despite lively debates on women's participation, participants did not address concrete issues related to other aspects of decision-making. There was little self-reflection on the weaknesses of civil society itself, or the kind of improvements individual civil society organizations may need to make (this was particularly reflected in the stakeholder interviews, in which respondents believed their internal governance was sufficient, and there was no need for any other development). Lastly, the question of sustainability received cursory treatment, with only some participants interested in exploring creative mechanisms for resource diversification.

The largest theme to emerge from official documents, workshop participants, and interview respondents concerns the ways in which the international community provides funding and implements assistance. Many of these concerns reflect common frustrations with how priorities are determined, resources are allocated, and overhead costs are covered. Some aspects result from entrenched organizational cultures and may be a necessary byproduct of the aid dynamic, and therefore difficult, if also unrealistic, to change. Other elements may present greater opportunities for enhancing the legitimate goals of aid coordination and effectiveness. Given the tone of the NGO Act and the civil society section of the *National Development Plan*, it may not be surprising that workshop participants reflected a particularly strong frustration with the international community. It is troubling, however, that their sole focus on the act's implementation relates to the role of the international community, without any corresponding awareness of how the Act may affect them. This includes, for example, the implications of whether there may soon come a time in which they themselves may be expected to more fully align their work with the government's agenda. In addition, there remains somewhat of a disconnect between the emphasis on prohibiting international organizations to act as implementers (and thus by extension, ensuring that this role will be filled by local actors instead), and the noted medium-level priority of improving the skills that may help local organizations to play this larger, more sophisticated role. It is also a bit ironic given the cliché

that Somaliland has “achieved more with less,”⁹⁴ that civil society continues to focus more on how the international community should function, rather than more fully devoting itself to examining ways in which it could wean itself from international donors.

Based on these observations and the priorities expressed by civil society representatives through the participatory workshop and interviews, opportunities for future donor support to Somaliland civil society include:

Opportunity 1: Support programming that focuses on advanced skills such as policy development/ engagement and government oversight.

Workshop participants and stakeholder interviewees universally expressed a belief that civil society has reached a saturation point with regard to basic capacity building. Many also believe that the time has come to move civil society to a more sophisticated level, although few were able to articulate what specific steps this may entail. As noted above, deeper examination would be necessary to accurately detail the kinds of skills that would be appropriately responsive to needs. Based on discussions, such skills might include policy development, government oversight, legislative drafting and budget analysis. Importantly, a shift towards more advanced skills should take care not to neglect whether newer, smaller, or more rural organizations may still need basic technical assistance. In this case, stronger local organizations should be empowered to take a leadership role in transferring their knowledge and experience to their peers.

Opportunity 2: Conduct and/or fund research on the development of civil society programs and to base decisions on how aid is allocated.

A number of civil society participants and interviewees emphasized the importance of research as the basis for how aid allocations are made. The absence of solid data or analysis on civil society itself underscores the difficulty of grasping nuances across the sector – urban versus rural, large organization versus small, advocacy versus service provision, etc. – as well as uncovering more concrete needs towards the consolidation of knowledge, skills and specializations. A greater focus on research – including organizational and/or sector assessments prior to funding, and project/impact evaluations post-funding – could also serve as a basis to advocate for independent priorities that may differ from the government’s stated agenda. Devolving research to local organizations to the degree possible, or conducting research in partnership with local organizations when not, may contribute to a stronger sense of local ownership over the results, and help build the capacity for local organizations to assume responsibility for such efforts in the future.

⁹⁴Eubank, Nick. "In Somaliland, Less Money Has Brought More Democracy." Web log post. *Poverty Matters Blog*. The Guardian, 26 Aug. 2011. Web. <<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/aug/26/somaliland-less-money-more-democracy>>.

Opportunity 3: Utilize advanced organizational development modalities such as embedded technical advisors/mentors and practical application of skills, rather than basic trainings.

Workshop participants expressed interest in moving past common forms of training, such as short-term seminars, to more sophisticated forms of knowledge transfer. Lamenting the difficulty of accessing international forums, many still hoped to find ways to learn from other countries about how civil society functions elsewhere. Some offered the suggestion of embedding technical advisors within individual organizations to provide more hands-on assistance tailored to on-the-job environments. Pairing financial support with on-site technical assistance would enable advisors to work side-by-side with staff to raise the level of skills necessary for effective implementation. The cultivation of mentoring relationships, which would continue after on-site assistance (for example, through email or Skype), would help ensure the sustainability of these skills and provide an ongoing resource for advice and consultation.

Opportunity 4: Provide longer-term grants to local civil society organizations that have proven themselves to be reliable partners.

Short-term, project-based funding complicates the ability of civil society organizations to cultivate and maintain staff and remain responsive to needs that fall outside of standard funding cycles or agendas. Local organizations that have proven themselves as solid, ongoing partners of international organizations should be considered for longer-term, institutional support that would allow them to shift their attention from continual fundraising to strategic planning. Such support should be accompanied by targeted technical assistance specific to each individual recipient to enable them to use the funding ethically and effectively, including meeting audit requirements, setting and achieving benchmarks and conducting performance monitoring.

Opportunity 5: Support initiatives that encourage the ability of civil society organizations to generate income through diverse means.

Given reasonable concerns for sustainability, civil society could significantly benefit from widening the base of funding for the sector. Despite a challenging operational context, the environment also offers a fairly diverse array of possibilities for generating additional income, including social entrepreneurship, for-fee services, diaspora philanthropy and private-sector support. International donors can encourage the development of these areas by showcasing models, supplying seed funding, offering matching incentives and providing specialized technical assistance. Such technical assistance should include how outreach strategies and reporting systems would need to shift along with funding patterns, as organizations learn the importance of being accountable to the public, rather than donors.

Opportunity 6: Encourage programming for civil society that strengthens citizen engagement.

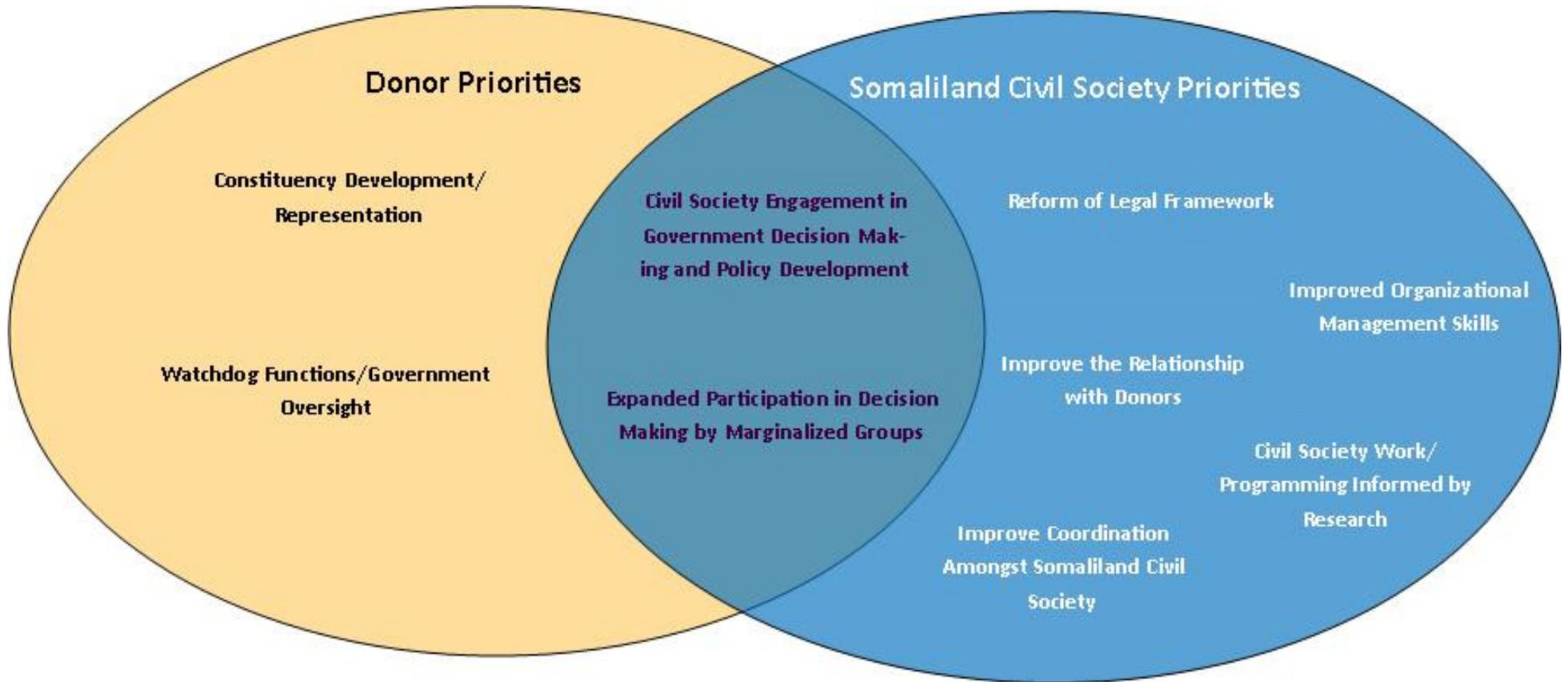
Existing literature, workshop input and stakeholder interviews provided little insight into the relationship between civil society and the larger public. Though the vision of civil society developed by workshop participants referenced “the capacity to engage and effectively

represent the citizens of Somaliland,” citizen representation did not find its way into subsequent discussions on priorities. It may be telling that some respondents can cite the *Paris Declaration* with greater ease or frequency than poverty or literacy statistics. The design of future programming may need to place greater emphasis on the link to constituencies and beneficiaries to ensure that improving the lives of citizens remains the ultimate goal of assistance. This could range from a focus on volunteer mobilization and community actions to the use of public forums and SMS messaging for encouraging two-way feedback mechanisms.

Opportunity 7: Encourage coalition building between civil society and other actors.

The desire for improved coordination runs as a theme through official Somaliland documents, workshop discussions, and stakeholder input. Given the simultaneous focus on local ownership, international organizations should strive to be model participants, rather than leaders, in coordination efforts. International actors, however, can help provide the tools that would improve coordination and can encourage civil society to take the next step towards coalition building. A coalition-building approach would enable individual stakeholders to maintain their specific priorities, while building alliances with likeminded partners. Such an approach may help move discussions past questions of information sharing and aid effectiveness to enlist a wider range of actors – including the media, academia, faith-based organizations, the Diaspora, and the business community – that can help achieve shared development goals, whether discouraging unsafe migration practices or increasing input into parliamentary decision-making processes. Related, cross-sector activities could include support for a civil society column in a newspaper or website, the funding of university or other research organizations to conduct research that informs advocacy, the planning of joint community actions with faith-based organizations, encouraging outreach to diaspora volunteers, and providing opportunities for networking with the private sector.

Civil Society Opportunity Map



PARLIAMENT

Overview

Somaliland's bicameral parliament was established in its first constitution, ratified in 2001.⁹⁵ The legislative powers of Somaliland are vested exclusively in two houses – the House of Representatives and the House of the Elders. The House of Representatives is elected and is the main legislative body of the republic. Members of the House of Elders (known as the *Guurti* in Somali) are currently appointed to represent the various communities and regions of the country and perform the functions of a revising chamber for legislation (except for legislation relating to financial matters).

Each chamber consists of 82 members. Members of the House of Representatives are directly elected for five-year terms, while members of the 82-seat upper house (the *Guurti*) are nominated by their respective clans for six-year terms.⁹⁶ The House of Elders also includes “honorary” members who are either former holders of the offices of president, vice-president or speakers of either house and who serve for life; in addition to this, up to five persons chosen by the president can enter either house on the basis of their “special significance to the nation” and who serve for the term of the house to which they are appointed.

Legal Context and Background

Somaliland's Parliament Pre-2001

During the May 1991 conference in which Somaliland re-asserted its independence, a “presidential” system of government was adopted. This type of government was articulated in the *Somaliland National Charter of 1993*, which confirmed an executive headed by a president and a legislature of two houses, the House of Representatives and the *Guurti*. Under Article 9 of the charter, members of the executive (ministers and deputy ministers) could not become members of the legislature. The Borama conference was decisive in the sense that issues of representation and power sharing were dealt with through the institutionalization of clans and their leadership into the system of governance. The political system established in 1993 became known as *beel*, meaning “clan” or “community,” integrating indigenous forms of institutional arrangements with modern institutions of government. The charter established a parliament comprising an upper House of Elders, the *Guurti*, and a lower House of Representatives.

The *beel* system was intended to be in place for three years, but remained for a decade. The formal ending of the civil war was signaled by a conference in Hargeisa, from October 1996 to February 1997, which extended the administration's tenure for a further four years, ratified an interim constitution and increased the number of seats available to non-Isaaq clans. The current Somaliland constitution was adopted by the two houses of parliament on April 30, 2000, and endorsed through the national referendum on May 31, 2001.

⁹⁵ Somalilanders voted overwhelmingly in favor of adopting the constitution, with almost 98 percent voting in favor out of a turnout of over 90 percent.

⁹⁶ As will be explained further on, in practice both chambers have extended their terms of office: the *Guurti's* six-year term was due to end in 2003 but has been extended on a number of occasions; the House of Representatives' term was due to end in 2005 but was similarly extended due to fears over political instability.

The *Guurti*: Legal Framework and its Limitations

While the constitution established the bicameral parliament, there are various laws governing elections to the respective chambers. The House of Representatives election law (Law No: 20-2/2005) deals with the direct election of 82 members of the House of Representatives and is the subject of considerably less discussion than the legal basis for the election of the *Guurti*, for which there have been various versions of bills proposing direct or indirect elections. Currently, there is no law governing the election/selection of the *Guurti*, with the constitution being unclear on this issue. Sections of the constitution state that the *Guurti* is to be elected, while other articles suggest the contrary. Article 58 (1) of the constitution states: “The members of the House of Elders shall be elected in a manner to be determined by law.” Article 62, however, suggests that members are selected rather than elected, stating: “The inaugural meeting of the House of Elders shall take place within 30 days of the date when their selection is completed. The meeting shall be opened by the chairman of the Supreme Court who shall administer the oath of office, and shall then be chaired by the oldest member of the house (in age) until the election of the official speaker of the house and his two deputies.”⁹⁷

As a result of this lack of clarity, the current members of the *Guurti* have had their term extended three times since being indirectly elected for a six-year term at the grand conference of the Somaliland communities in 1997. The last House of Elders election bill, proposing direct election of members was passed by the House of Representatives on September 16, 2006 with 34 voting for and 30 against. The two opposition parties supported the proposal, though civil society groups were in support of indirect elections. The bill was then considered on September 23, 2006, and rejected by two-thirds of *Guurti* members. As a result of this stalemate, the term of the existing *Guurti* was extended by another 4 years.⁹⁸ This term was again extended in 2010.

In relation to these concerns, there exists a widespread perception that the *Guurti* has become politicized; aligned with the government of the day and therefore leading to a marginalization of the House of Representatives. The extension of the *Guurti*'s mandate beyond peace-building and conflict resolution between clans is described by an interviewee as having “transformed” the *Guurti* into a government-supporting chamber.⁹⁹

2005 Elections – House of Representatives

The first direct elections to the House of Representatives were held in September 2005, having been postponed from their original date in 2003. These elections have been described as “not only the final stage in Somaliland’s laborious transition from clan-based power-sharing to multiparty politics, but – in a very real sense – the arrival of a competitive, democratic electoral culture in the country.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ The Constitution of the Republic of Somaliland (Republic of Somaliland 2001). Print.

⁹⁸ The previous two term extensions for members of the *Guurti* were based on a resolution of the House of Representatives.

⁹⁹ Interview, member of parliament.

¹⁰⁰ *A Vote for Peace: How Somaliland Successfully Hosted Its First Parliamentary Elections in 35 Years*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2006. Print.

Despite being heralded as a new chapter in Somaliland's democratic history, the 2005 parliamentary elections were besieged with challenges which reflect systemic and ongoing problems in the political system. The elections were met with resistance from existing House members and suffered from an incomplete electoral law, largely in regard to the distribution of seats over the country's six regions.¹⁰¹ The problem of distributing seats fairly was compounded by a lack of census or voter registration data, which has remained a problem in subsequent elections.

The lack of an election law caused a delay to the elections and a growing frustration from opposition parties. With the election date set for March 2005, Speaker of the House Ahmed Adan Qaybe, requested technical assistance from the international community to formulate a viable electoral law and an international consultant was recruited. In December 2004, a draft electoral law was distributed to the House of Representatives for review. The new draft was contentious, and pitted the majority of the house members against a handful of leaders who were stridently opposed to the new law. After a number of re-draftings and debates, facilitated by the Academy for Peace and Development in May 2005, an electoral law was passed, paving the way for the elections to take place.¹⁰²

Significantly, both houses extended their terms in September 2010, on the basis that the government would not be able to organize another election straight after the 2010 presidential poll. The *Guurti* voted to increase its term by another three years in addition to the four it had already been granted. The House of Representatives, whose term was supposed to expire in December 2010, gave itself an extension of two years and eight months.

Representation of Women and Marginalized Groups

The parliamentary representation of women and marginalized groups (the traditional occupational castes known as *Gabooye*) was not addressed in the constitution. While women's groups and civil society organizations campaigned for provisions to enable women and marginalized groups greater representation in the new parliament (including a proposal to reserve seats for women and minority groups in July 2012),¹⁰³ these requests were rejected by the House of Representatives after the provision for quotas was deemed unconstitutional.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Disagreements over this issue were clan-based in nature, with for instance, the 'indigenous' clans of Hargeisa arguing that with more than 40 percent of the total electorate their region should get at least 40 percent of the seats. This frustrated minority clans who already felt that they had been marginalized in parliament.

¹⁰² *A Vote for Peace: How Somaliland Successfully Hosted Its First Parliamentary Elections in 35 Years*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2006. Print.

¹⁰³ Known as the *Reserved Seats Bill 2012*. In particular, the proposed women's quota has been an issue strongly supported by women's groups, particularly following Kulmiye's campaign platform for the presidential election, which included a commitment to a quota. It is difficult for Somalilanders to understand the concept of a quota however, "Islamic and Somali culture equalizes the status of men and women. That does not mean that people see men and women as the same or having the same roles. A lot of men ask, 'Women have a role. Why do they want to be exceptional?' Many women say, 'A woman can't represent us. Clan politics is a man's role. Our role is to raise a family, look after the household, raise and educate children, and to support our husband.'" (After Borama, ARI, 2013).

¹⁰⁴ Berrkhad Dahir (2012) 'Somaliland lawmakers oppose parliament quota for women and minorities'. *Sabahi*. 06/09/2012. http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/09/06/feature-02

The under-representation of women in both houses is considered an enduring problem, with only one woman in the House of Representatives.¹⁰⁵ The issue is heavily influenced by the predominance of clan politics which has meant that both women and the *Gabooye* fail to win nominations for candidacy. In the case of women, traditional values dovetail with practical considerations: which clan does a woman represent, hers or her husband's?¹⁰⁶ Not only is a woman's loyalty to her clan questioned, but it is thought that women representatives whose clan is indeterminate upsets a delicate balancing act between clans, and disrupts accountability systems within clans.¹⁰⁷ Compounding, and in direct relation to this, funding for women candidates is not forthcoming from the clan.

Actors

The 2001 constitution establishes the following roles and functions of each chamber of the Somaliland parliament:

House of Representatives

Article 39 of the constitution describes the House of Representatives as “the first part of the country's legislature, passing laws and approving and overseeing the general political situation and the direction of the country.”

The powers of the House of Representative are set out in Articles 53, 54 and 55 of the constitution:

- To approve all legislation (with the *Guurti*);
- To oversee taxation, the budget and financial accounts;
- To approve all the presidential appointments set out in the constitution;
- To oversee government policies and programs;
- To debate, comment on and approve government plans;
- To give advice and recommendations to the government about the general direction of its policies;
- To summon ministers or officials as part of its oversight duty;
- To ratify international agreements;
- To declare states of emergency, and;
- To impeach members of government.

The House of Representatives possesses an exclusive power in relation to financial issues, confirmation of presidential appointments (other than that of the chairman of the Supreme Court), and changes in the symbols of the nation. It holds a pre-eminent position in respect to changes to the constitution under Article 126 of the constitution, and in the ratification of

¹⁰⁵ The only female member of the *Guurti*, who inherited her seat from her late husband, resigned in April 2013 due to the wishes of her husband's clan (which she was representing).

¹⁰⁶ According to Abdirahman Yusuf Duale, Minister of Information, “Women have been largely excluded from politics. One of the reasons relates to the clan system. Usually a woman is not seen as belonging to a clan. This is because in a way she belongs to two clans – she has her own clan and also the clan of her husband. This means that women play a different role to men in the clan system.” (After Borama, ARI, 2013).

¹⁰⁷ *After Borama: Concensus, Representation and Parliament in Somaliland*. Rep. London: Africa Research Institute, 2013. Print. Policy Voices Ser.

treaties (although treaties which are of a regional or international character must be discussed at a joint meeting of both Houses, as set out in Article 38(6)).

House of Elders or *Guurti*

The *Guurti* played a critical role in peace-building following the collapse of the Barre regime in 1991 and the disintegration of all other political institutions. Over a seven-year period, between 1990 and 1997, the *Guurti* led a reconciliation process based on its traditional mandate to resolve conflicts and preserve peace in north Somalia. The *Guurti* organized 39 clan-based peace and reconciliation conferences in this period, contributing to peaceful relations between war-affected communities and enabling the establishment of local and national institutions of government. Reflecting this, the *Guurti* has a discrete role in respect to religion, security, tradition and peace.

The *Guurti* also has a special constitutional role in "consulting the traditional heads of the communities" (Article 61(4)). Article 62 of the constitution sets out the upper chamber's principal duties and legislative functions:

- Approve legislation relating to religion, tradition/culture, and security;
- Review legislation approved by the House of Representatives, with the exception of legislation relating to financial matters. It may refer legislation back to the House of Representatives only once within 30 days, though the lower chamber can override the *Guurti's* objections and confirm the bill with a two-thirds' majority;
- Advise on the shortcomings of the administration of the government and the presentation of such advice to the House of Representatives;
- Assist the government in matters relating to religion, security, defense, traditions (culture), economy and society, while consulting the traditional heads of the communities;
- Hold members accountable by summoning members of the government and putting questions to them about the fulfillment of their duties, and;
- Extend the terms of office of the president and the House of Representatives when exceptional circumstances make an election impossible.

Committees

Article 18(1) sets out the House of Representatives' standing committees, which include a total of eight committees: the permanent committee; the economic, finance and commerce committee; the social and religious affairs committee; the environment, livestock, agriculture and natural resources committee; the internal affairs, security and defense committee; the foreign affairs, international co-operation and national planning committee; and the constitution, justice and human rights committee.

Ad hoc committees may be formed as needed and the committees are to meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays (Rule 20(9)).¹⁰⁸ Under Article 7, the standing committees of the *Guurti* are: the permanent committee, the security committee, the economic committee, the social affairs committee and the law and justice committee.

¹⁰⁸ According to field staff this schedule is not adhered to in practice.

Alliances and Strategies

Under the governance pillar of the *National Development Plan*, the government of Somaliland considers the needs of the Somaliland parliament over a 5-year period. Costing a projected \$4 million, the priorities in the plan are:

- Constitutional reform;
- Building institutional capacity;
- Enhancing linkages between elected members of the parliament and their constituencies;
- Strengthening the capacity of the selected parliamentary committees and house staff;
- Improving the system of reviewing and approving laws and regulations proposed by the executive;
- Building research and information generation and dissemination capacity;
- Addressing the gender imbalance in parliament, and;
- Holding the government accountable.

In order to meet these priorities, the strategy identifies the following activities as critical:¹⁰⁹

- Building a library shared by both houses;
- Hiring legal experts;
- Establishing a printing press shared by both houses;
- Building new cafeteria for both houses of parliament;
- Recruiting support staff;
- Training members and staff to enhance their skills;
- Organizing study tours;
- Establishing regional offices for constituency consultation;
- Clearing backlog legislation;
- Upgrading the security of the parliament, and;
- Enhancing the information and communications technology system, including creation of a database for the House of Representatives.

Future Considerations

While it has been argued that Somaliland demonstrates “the efficacy of internally-driven, culturally-rooted, ‘bottom-up’ approaches to post-war nation-building” which reconcile “indigenous cultures and traditions and modernity,”¹¹⁰ the future of Somaliland’s parliament depends on its ability to show that it is a dynamic force in the country’s development.

The over-riding consideration for Somaliland’s parliament in the near future is the planned elections for the House of Representatives, which have been scheduled for June 2015, and the *Guurti*, for June 2016. These elections will demonstrate whether the government has sufficient

¹⁰⁹ There is a mismatch between budgeted activities and stated activities.

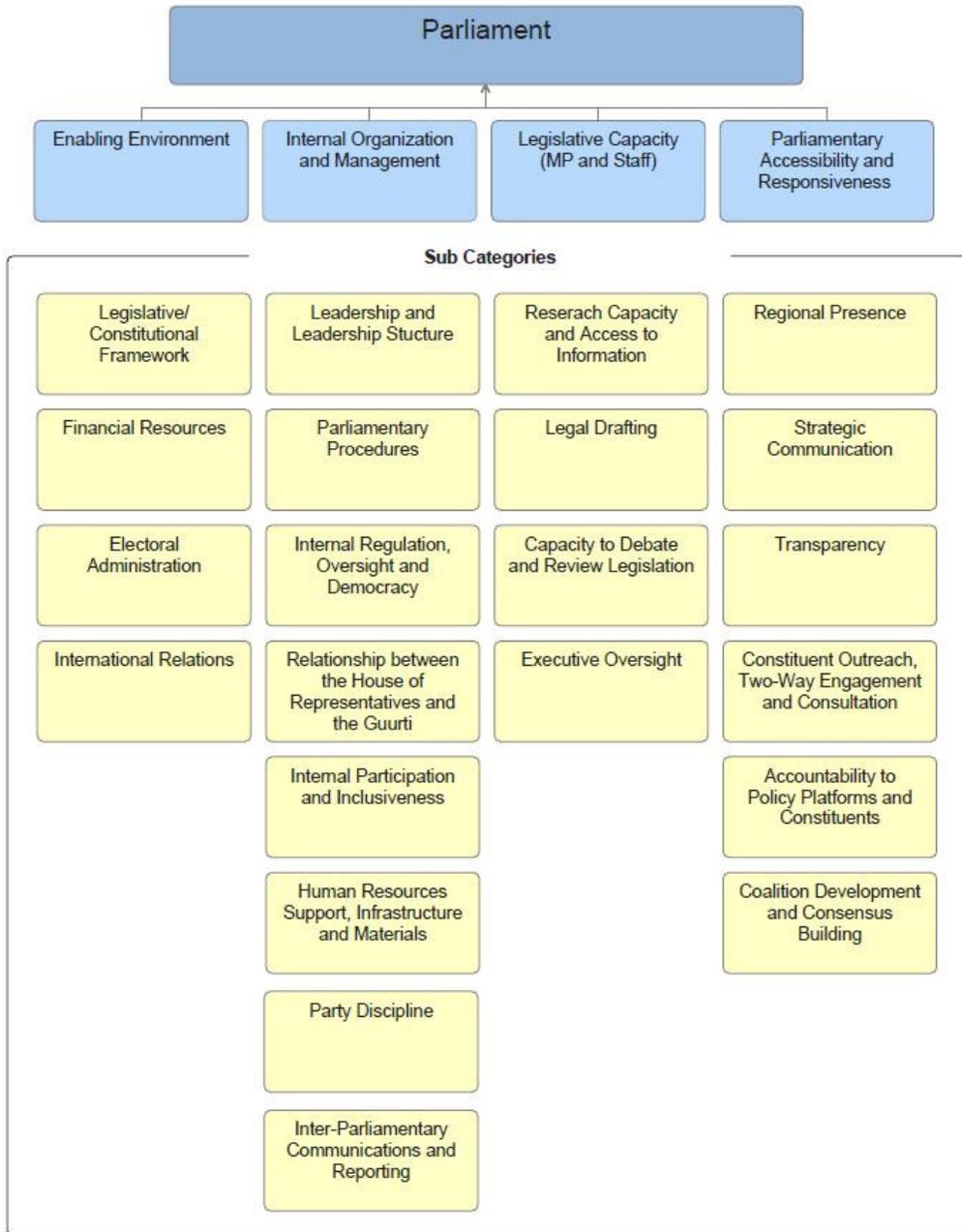
¹¹⁰ Jhazbhay, Iqbal D. *Somaliland: An African Struggle for Nationhood and International Recognition*. Johannesburg: Institute for Global Dialogue/South African Institute of International Affairs, 2009. Print.

political will to address lingering issues such as a definitive electoral law for parliament and a voter registry.

Somaliland Strategy Analysis Framework: Parliament

For the purposes of this democratization strategy assessment, analysis of parliament interests, needs and priorities took place within a framework informed by understandings of the ‘ideal-type’ role and function of parliaments.

A graphical representation of the Somaliland parliament framework is shown below:



This framework includes categories and sub-categories of parliament's work, interests and influences, both real and potential in the case of Somaliland. Many of these were not addressed at all by Somalilanders in interviews or workshops due to lack of time, knowledge or perceived prioritization on the part of Somalilander participants, but are nonetheless helpful to identify next-steps, relative priorities and overlap with donor interests.

The top level boxes in light blue identify major categories of parliament influences and internal and external roles and responsibilities. The lower level boxes in yellow identify sub-categories of parliament influences (such as legislative and constitutional framework) and roles and responsibilities related to each of the major categories. These are general headings and as such comprise a number of different parliamentary influences and activities.

Parliamentary priorities discussed in the following section are organized by these categories and subcategories. Some subcategories are not discussed; those that are not discussed were not mentioned by workshop participants or interviewees to a significant degree.

Parliament's Priorities for Democratization

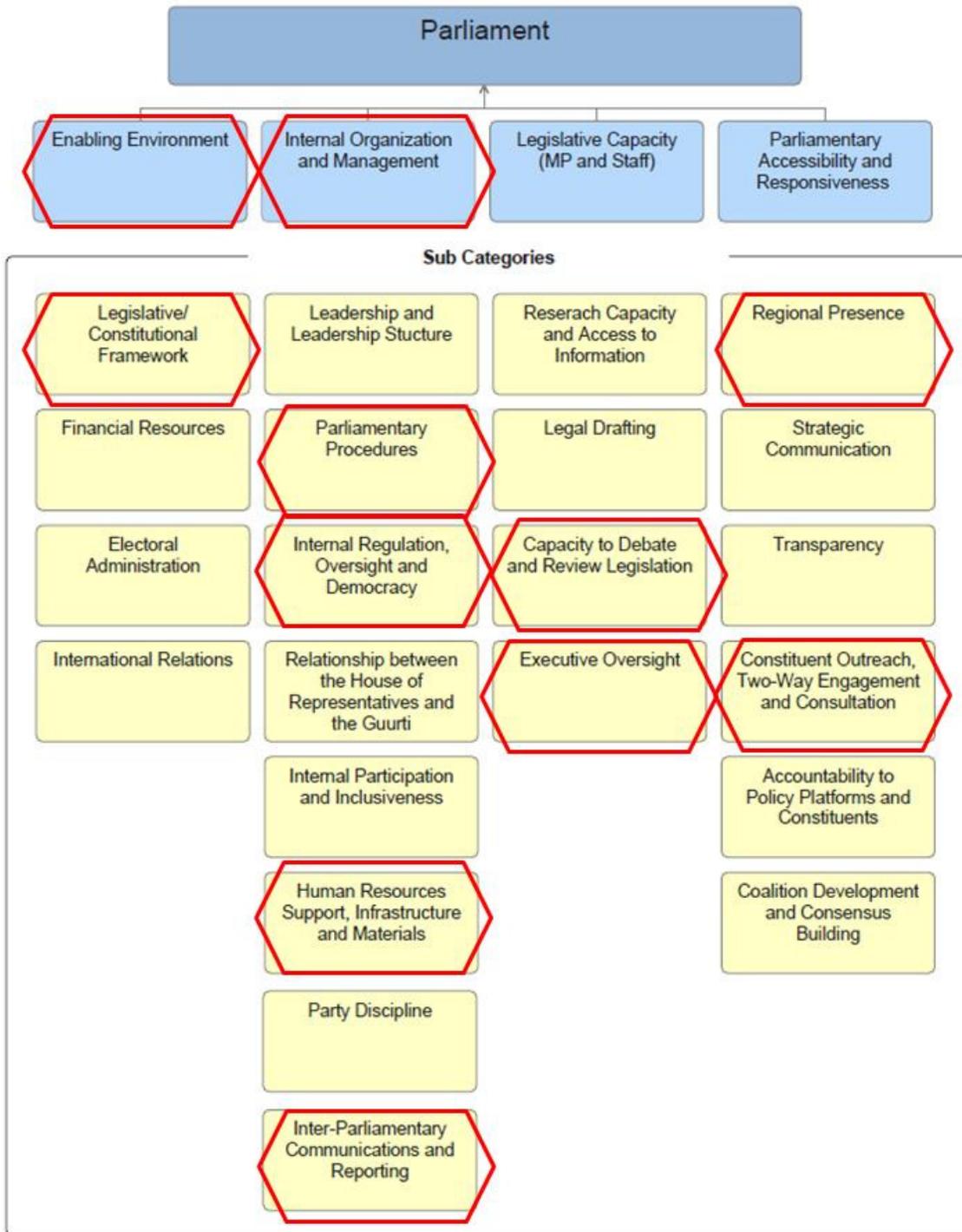
This section outlines Somalilander priorities in terms of overarching categories with the following order of prioritization:

1. Internal organization and management;
2. Enabling environment;
3. Legislative capacity (members of parliament and staff); and
4. Parliamentary accessibility and responsiveness.

Data for this section is primarily based on the prioritization workshop involving members of parliament¹¹¹, interviews¹¹² and a visit to parliament. Parliament participants, through interviews, strategy workshop outputs and discussions, prioritized different subcategories of parliamentary influences and roles and responsibilities. The prioritized subcategories are highlighted below with red boxes:

¹¹¹ It should be noted that participants at this workshop were members of the House of Representatives and did not include the *Guurti* or parliamentary staff.

¹¹² Interviews were conducted with members of the *Guurti* and House of Representatives.



It is of interest to compare those subcategories that are prioritized with those subcategories that are not prioritized. Note that those that are not highlighted as high priorities may have been listed as medium priority or low priority, or may not have been mentioned at all by participants. The following section describes the high, medium and low priorities raised by parliament within each of these categories in further detail.

Internal Organization and Management – High Priority

Workshops participants considered internal organization and management the area in which parliament needed the most – and most immediate – support in order to fulfill its tripartite functions of representation, legislation and oversight. This decision was justified on the grounds that the need for fundamental internal reform of the way in which parliament is led and structured was a prerequisite to addressing other categories, in particular the building of legislative and oversight capacity. In the words of one member of parliament, “God helps those who help themselves, so we have to first put our house in order.” This sentiment was met with widespread agreement, with participants understanding internal organization and management to be a crucial building block to both houses undertaking their roles.

Parliamentary Procedures

The highest priority change in this category was reform of parliamentary procedures, which cut across a number of sub-categories. It should be noted that there is a degree of overlap between the changes identified in this category and what could be seen as being part of enabling environment (specifically the legislative/constitutional framework sub-category) because many of the changes proposed would often also entail changes to the constitution in terms of the way in which parliament is structured.

Internal Regulation, Oversight and Democracy

The sub-category internal regulation, oversight and democracy was well-covered in the workshop discussion, with participants identifying a number of areas of key internal reform which need to take place in order for there to be adequate internal democracy, horizontal accountability and regulatory oversight both within parliament and between parliament and the executive. Participants’ proposals for reform centered upon the House of Representatives due to the affiliation of all the participants. There was a commonly-felt concern over the potential politicization of the House of Representatives by the executive in terms of regular interference with the affairs of the house, leading opposition members of parliament to suggest that the house’s agenda be set by an ad hoc committee elected by the house as an attempt to insulate the house’s agenda from executive influence.

A further proposal which emerged during the discussion was that committees need to have greater technical capacity in order to guard against excessive politicization. Committees were described by one participant as “very weak in knowledge” which meant that they did not have a “different voice from the government of the time.” Participants also identified critical problems within the committee structure and scrutiny process, with suggestions that membership of committees was being used for political ends by the government. There was sharp criticism of the speaker and his deputies for presiding over the marginalization of committee chairmen in the appointment and removals process by bypassing chairmen when making decisions regarding the membership of committees. This issue is bound up with the leadership and leadership structure sub-category, with participants voicing similar concerns about what was deemed a ‘dictatorship by the speaker’ over members of parliament in the lower chamber.¹¹³

¹¹³ It was not established whether these problems were also present in the upper chamber.

Further, on the basis of fears that the speaker was not an independent figure, participants felt that there was a need for the speaker and his deputies to be “elected and removed in a democratic, open way”, in the words of one member of parliament. Participants felt the appointments procedure compromised the separation of powers, and ensured that the House of Representatives tended to serve the interests of the executive; this point was however vehemently denied by a member of leadership present, particularly in regard to the claim that committee chairmen were being bypassed in decision-making over the appointment and removal of committee members.

The need for financial procedures to be made more inclusive and transparent was expressed by participants as well. Participants felt that it was especially important that the proposed parliamentary budget be approved and audited by the two chambers themselves, rather than the current system in which budgets are prepared by the two speakers and submitted to the executive without consultation.¹¹⁴ During the discussion, a number of participants claimed that the way in which parliamentary budgets were drawn up was “not transparent,” with members of parliament feeling that the only way to ensure they were able to participate in budgetary discussions would be to “establish new systems for consultation on financial matters.”

Inter-Parliamentary Communications and Reporting

Participants identified as a priority the inter-parliamentary communications and reporting sub-category. Participants expressed the need for a greater flow of information within parliament, including weekly bulletins, an electronic database accessible to members and staff and an increase in cross-party groups/issue-based caucuses to ensure that members of parliament and committees collaborate across parties. While the issue of Hansard reporting did not emerge during the workshops, it was later discussed with the deputy speaker during the parliamentary visit in which the need for capacity support to the existing Hansard staff members was highlighted. Interviewees also agreed that the current parliamentary reporting systems were extremely weak and therefore hindered the effective communication of parliamentary proceedings across parliament.

Human Resources Support, Infrastructure and Materials

Finally, participants identified the need to establish policies and procedures for human resourcing, following a merit-based recruitment model, as a priority. Participants spoke of this issue particularly in regard to the *Guurti*, the members of which are thought to lack skills for fulfilling their duties. While this issue dovetails with that of the Legislative Capacity category, the problem of there being no minimum requirements for people to be appointed as a member of the *Guurti* was understood to be symptomatic of a wider absence of adequate internal recruitment processes. In the words of one participant, “According to our constitution, the requirement to be qualified for the *Guurti* is very minimum. There is no level of education, there is no experience. And now-a-days, it goes as a heritage. If old man dies, his son takes his place...appointment procedure is also wrong.” The implications of this, can be, as another

¹¹⁴ This is prior to the final budget being passed by parliament.

participant explained, “when our bill is [to] go to them, if they don’t have enough experience, they can make a lot of mistakes and they come up with wrong recommendations.”¹¹⁵

Enabling Environment – Medium Priority

Making changes in parliament’s external enabling environment was considered a medium priority, and was recognized as a fundamental building block for legislative capacity and parliamentary accessibility and responsiveness, which were lower priorities. There is considerable overlap between internal organization and management and the enabling environment, and it is therefore worth noting that many of the changes in the previous category would also require changes to the enabling environment.

Legislative/Constitutional Framework

The principal reason that the enabling environment is relatively important in terms of priorities is due to the pressing need for changes and greater clarity in the legislative/constitutional framework. This sub-category was identified as key to addressing many of the problems parliament faces, most prominently the ‘problem’ of the (s)election of the *Guurti*. One participant explained that addressing problems in the constitution was a priority because it was “prepared when there was no government. Now it is over 21 years and the loopholes are plenty. When it was made it was tailored to a particular time,” and thus the current constitution is “not complete.” Participants spoke of legal loopholes and ambiguities as helping to allow the executive to interfere in the work of parliament, thereby breaching the separation of powers.

In terms of specific legal loopholes that need addressing, participants identified the following as pressing problems which affect their ability to carry out their functions:

- **Membership of the house of *Guurti*:** Participants discussed how the House of Representatives and the *Guurti* have the same number of members, pointing to other countries where there are fewer members in the upper house than the lower house. One participant proposed the number of *Guurti* members be reduced to five per region. Interviewees, including members of the *Guurti*, also identified this as a key priority as Somaliland nears the next parliamentary elections.
- **Election Laws:** Participants and interviewees expressed support for a comprehensive electoral law for parliament in order to guide the forthcoming elections to both houses. An enduring concern for participants was the apparent lack of clarity in the constitution regarding whether the *Guurti* be selected by clans or popularly elected. Participants, all of whom were members of the House of Representatives, were overwhelmingly

¹¹⁵ Similar issues of capacity are found in the staffing of parliament, though things are changing as recruitment has become more formalized, as one member of parliament notes in a recent publication by the Africa Research Institute, “In the past, the people who performed these roles were not graduates. Now we take only the best graduates. We held a competition to find the best students. Out of 300 graduates we selected only eight. Some of them are secondary school leavers who are computer-literate, others attended the local university. They have degrees in different disciplines, but primarily in law. We have sent some of them for further education. The first two have graduated with master’s degrees – one from Addis Ababa and another from Pretoria. We are building our local staff. Every subcommittee has one qualified secretary. We also have staff qualified to do budget and financial work. But we have to train more. In the future, I believe we should ensure that all staff have some specialization.” (After Borama, ARI, 2013).

supportive of an interpretation of the constitution that provided for an elected *Guurti*, “According to our constitution, they should have been elected also. There’s nowhere in the constitution or any act that suggests that they should be selected by clans...we have an article in the constitution that says members of the *Guurti* should be elected.”¹¹⁶

- **Role and Remit of the *Guurti*:** Participants felt that the *Guurti*’s functions and powers now exceeded their original intent of dealing with “religious culture and religion, peace and conflict resolution issues.” There is a perceived contradiction between the powers given to the *Guurti* in the constitution and its reason for existence, with participants and interviewees supporting a reduced role for the *Guurti* and constitutional provisions which reflect this. There was support for revising the entry requirements for the *Guurti* in order to address this mismatch by ensuring members were “up to the job,” according to one interviewee.¹¹⁷
- **Women’s Political Participation:** Some participants prioritized constitutional change due to the need for the constitution to “incorporate women’s rights and access to political participation,” for instance through a women’s quota for parliamentary seats.

Further, participants were keen to highlight that the limitations of both the constitution and existing legislation hinder their ability to oversee and scrutinize the executive.¹¹⁸

- **Constitutional Provisions for an Independent Judiciary:** According to one participant, “as parliament, we cannot do our function to scrutinize the government activities unless we have independent judiciary. As the constitution is today, we cannot have independent judiciary unless we change the constitution. So, the system of checks and balance in our system of government is not workable as it is today in our constitution because the executive nominates all members of the judiciary and expels or discharge them according to his wish. If there’s no independent judiciary, you cannot have a check and balance.”
- **Accountability between the Executive and Parliament:** Participants felt that parliament was not able to fulfill its scrutiny role because it was unable to hold individual ministers accountable, and that provisions in the constitution needed to be changed in order to facilitate this role. While parliament must approve ministerial appointments it has “no power to remove them if they are incompetent.” Participants also mentioned their ability to scrutinize the budget and ministerial spending was constrained due to constitutional provisions which place the auditor general under the Ministry of Finance, “so he is not accountable to the public.”

¹¹⁶ Unlike the other three entities (president, House of Representatives and local councils) there is no electoral law that governs the selection process of new members of the *Guurti*. A selection process must either be based on a system of nomination or of direct election.

¹¹⁷ See previous category – internal management and organization.

¹¹⁸ This overlaps with the legislative capacity category.

- Institutionalization and Awareness of Functions, Roles and Remit: Participants identified the need to establish an act articulating the roles of parliament, separate from the constitution, in order for members of parliament, staff, government and the public to have a reference point with regards to the functions, roles and remit of both Houses. It was felt that this needs to occur prior to the parliamentary elections, particularly in the case of the *Guurti*.

Financial Resources

Surprisingly, given the centrality of financial resources to the workings of parliament and the challenges associated with a lack of resources, financial resources was ranked as a medium priority in this category. Participants felt that parliament needed a greater budget allocation in order to fulfill its functions, which were discussed in terms of legislative capacity and parliamentary accessibility and responsiveness.¹¹⁹

International Relations

Participants also identified desired changes under the international relations sub-category; participants were adamant that the enabling environment was currently hindered by a lack of international recognition and that Somaliland is being overlooked in favor of Somalia. International recognition was described as a critical change in the political environment by participants, because it increased the likelihood of international assistance. One participant remarked, “Somaliland is very democratic...yet we are not recognized by international organizations and our budget is very limited compared to Somalia. They are assisted by international organizations yet their parliament is not democratically elected.” Another participant said that to be a member of parliament in an unrecognized country in Africa is “the worst job in the world” due to lack of funds and political leverage.

Election Administration

Participants considered the administering of parliamentary elections, and in particular identified voter registration by the National Electoral Commission, as a major immediate priority. Participants were concerned that the National Electoral Commission’s mandate would run out before elections to both chambers were held. This was described as a “shame” by one workshop participant who felt that the National Electoral Commission was “very professional and could teach Somalilanders much about how to go about doing things.” The main subject of discussion, however, concerned the need to establish the basis of free and fair elections in which all eligible citizens participated. There were fears that the government was “stalling” on the important task of voter registration in order to delay elections, though some participants did recognize that the significant financial burden of undertaking voter registration was a major hurdle.

¹¹⁹ During this discussion a participant in a parliamentary leadership position tempered complaints of lack of funds by members of parliament, “Every organization is short of money, and when they prepare the budget they put a lot of money which our economy cannot allow. So, it is the duty of the Minister of Finance to make a lot of cutting. So, this also is the same with the parliament. They cannot always give us all the programs we have listed which are due to budgetary [constraints]. Our government cannot afford to pay all this.”

Legislative Capacity (Members of Parliament and Staff) – Low Priority

Participants felt that this category was dependent on changes in both the enabling environment and internal organization and management, and therefore was not prioritized in and of itself. Some of the changes that appear here are arguably relevant to other categories but were understood by participants as directly relating to legislative capacity.

Executive Oversight

Participants referred to the challenges facing parliament in exercising their capacity to oversee the executive and hold it to account. According to participants, their capacity is constrained by an absence of a legal framework to compel the executive to change its behavior on the basis of parliamentary scrutiny, “even if we get the information we cannot do anything with it – we are not equal to the executive in practice and cannot enforce change,” claimed one member of parliament in the opposition.

Legal Drafting/Capacity to Debate and Review Legislation

Participants placed high priority on the legal drafting and capacity to debate and review legislation sub-categories. Specifically, participants proposed that members of parliament receive support to attend study tours abroad in order to experience and learn from other parliaments. However, this priority was not expressed in terms of what was expected to change as a result of such trips and therefore needs to be seen more as a means to an end (the building of capacity). Other ideas for improving capacity in these areas included reform of entry requirements for staff (see internal organization and management) and the acquisition of qualified legal drafters to work in-house.¹²⁰

Research Capacity and Access to Information

The research capacity and access to information sub-category was also ranked as a medium priority within the legislative capacity category. Linked to the capacity to draft legislation, participants expressed a desire to have greater access to information themselves (rather than relying only on staff researchers) in order to acquire greater drafting and revising capacity. In particular, participants identified the establishment of a library and acquisition of computers as a way of facilitating access to wider knowledge that could be used as reference points in both the drafting of legislation and informing members of parliament on particular issues over which they are asked to vote.

Parliamentary Accessibility and Responsiveness – Low Priority

While this category was a low priority for participants, it should be noted that much of the discussion was directed toward the need to increase engagement with constituents and establish a social contract between citizens and their elected representatives. The prioritization of both internal organization and management and the enabling environment was done with this very much in mind.

Regional Presence

The highest change priority identified within this category was to have mechanisms of accessibility for the members of parliament at the local level. Participants were adamant that, in order to perform a representative function and be accountable to the electorate, it was essential

¹²⁰ This was thought to depend on the availability of financial resources and is linked to enabling environment.

that their presence in their respective constituencies increase, through both frequent visits and the establishment of local offices with staff. In particular, the vast distances members of parliament need to travel to reach their constituencies is a major issue and lack of transport and means to find transport through personal funds leads to members of parliament seldom visiting their constituencies. According to one participant, “members should go back once every month...He should go back and have an office and meet his people. That we don’t have.” Interviewees also demonstrated a particular concern with parliament-constituent relations at the local level and prioritized the setting up of offices and establishing the means to undertake regular visits to constituencies in order to build trust in elected representatives.

Accountability to Policy Platforms and Constituents/ Constituent Outreach, Two-Way Engagement and Consultation

It was felt that members of parliament need to reflect the wishes of the electorate by being able to listen to their concerns. According to one participant, “Parliament is not that responsive to issues... Parliament does not have the mechanisms to discuss the issues...the parliament doesn’t say ‘what are the issues of today’, for example education. It doesn’t facilitate members of parliament to discuss issues existing at that day.” It was explained that even when members of parliament travel back to their constituencies it is not always positive due to high expectations which go unmet, leading to tensions between members of parliament and constituents, creating a disincentive to travel back to constituencies. One participant explained that constituents think of their members of parliament as “very low” and that “we are not functioning, and we are useless, and we using the budget and not working, just because they are not being informed.” Another participant remarked that “they [constituents] hate us.” Lack of activity is therefore a reason not to travel to constituencies. According to one participant, “although I am able to travel to my constituency, I have nothing to do, so there’s no point of going back because the authority of members of parliament in Somaliland is minimal.” Another argued that because he was unable to solve any of the problems constituents face, “there’s no point of going back to your constituency. Simply it will create hatred and disrespect to you the parliamentarian. People don’t understand that being a parliamentarian you are unable to do anything.” Participants spoke of a need for institutionalized mechanisms to guarantee that members of parliament – and in particular committees – held regular consultations with the public, including with civil society organizations and interest organizations likely to have expertise in a legislative area.

Strategic Communication

Participants felt that strategic communications from parliament was needed in order to clarify expectations and also to update constituents on work that is being done in Hargeisa. Participants agreed that parliament should make a greater effort to communicate its activities, ensuring the website is accessible and up-to-date and producing a book to explain the history, role and functions of the *Guurti*. This issue of communications was recognized as a two-way issue, with information flowing in both directions: “members are accountable to the parliament as well as their constituencies... Members of parliament should be sufficient to be able to run the parliament and feed the information back to his own constituents,” according to one member of parliament. Participants emphasized the need to communicate the work parliament is doing at the national level. Though members of parliament must spend most of their time in Hargeisa, argued one participant, “We should go to our core constituencies and regions and tell our people what’s going on.”

However, it was also recognized that communication was not a panacea and this did not solve the fundamental problem regarding constituent relations: a lack of constituency development. Crucially, members of parliament felt that they are unable to keep the promises made to constituents when they were elected because “parliament has no budget for the development of the constituencies.”

Priority Opportunities for International Support

Recommended Areas of Continued Support

1. *Focus on structural issues relating to parliamentary elections*

Although there is a level of reluctance from donors to continue to prioritize elections over the “everyday” business of governing a country, it is recommended that support to parliament in the immediate term be tailored towards the smooth running of parliamentary elections in 2015;¹²¹ and further, that the current challenges identified by both workshop participants and interviewees – namely the absence of an electoral law for parliamentary elections, a clear legal framework for the (s)election of the *Guurti*, and the huge task of undertaking voter registration – are prioritized as part of these efforts. Targeting and addressing these problems will ensure that the impact of electoral support is felt beyond the lifespan of the elections, though it is important to recognize that comprehensive support for parliamentary elections will require a variety of concurrent inputs which cut across the categories and sub-categories presented here.

2. *Increasing parliamentary accessibility and responsiveness through regional presence*

Though this category was not a high priority overall, the workshop discussion itself demonstrated that there is a perceived need to build trust in parliament at a local level, and ensure members of parliament are representative, accountable, accessible and responsive to the needs of constituents. This is an important issue in the run-up to the next parliamentary elections, which need public buy-in if elected representatives are to obtain solid mandates. Key entry points in the short-term are therefore bound-up with pre-election voter education, but in the longer-term, the relationship between constituents and members of parliament would be enhanced by greater local presence through regular visits, established constituency offices, strategic communications, and supporting civil society groups that function as entry points for dialogue. The demand from members of parliament to engage more with communities is strong, presenting an ideal entry point, and there is arguably scope for members of parliament to communicate and collaborate more with local councils while retaining their independence.

3. *Support capacity building initiatives which offer clear outcomes and build country ownership*

The workshop demonstrated a huge demand for more study trips for a wider group of parliamentarians. While their popularity is clear, their long-term impact is less so. There is a real challenge in ensuring support reflects identified priorities, but also that it can be linked with a clear outcome. While there is sense in the suggestion by one donor representative that study trips should not be supported in favor of other types of support, it is still important for donors to

¹²¹ Following the postponement of elections in 2013.

consider why study trips are so popular with Somalilanders and why they might be of benefit in the future. It is recommended that support to study trips continue following a detailed consideration of past experiences and their impact.

Second, the support the international community has provided for intermittent legal consultants to work on important legal drafts is another area where support should continue, particularly if efforts to prepare for the parliamentary elections include a comprehensive electoral law. However, this needs to be pursued in a way that builds on rather than detracts from internal capacity and country ownership, for instance by using a mix of international and national consultants who are also responsible for providing training and mentoring services to committees.

4. Support the creation of an environment of learning and information-sharing through investments in infrastructure

Dovetailing recommendation three regarding internal legislative capacity-building efforts, there is an accompanying need for investments in infrastructure that would facilitate learning and research among members of parliament and staff, including a library, computer equipment and access to online resources. This is an area in which donor support would be well-placed, though it is important to note that the provision of access to information is not tantamount to information being used: accompanying training and guidance on how to use information in the context of parliament's work is also needed to supplement material investments.

Gaps in Support to be Addressed

1. Undertake a capacity needs assessment to inform a legislative capacity-building strategy

The need for both members of parliament and staff to be better equipped to draft, review and debate legislation was a common theme among participants and interviewees. Given that there is a high demand and assumed willingness to participate in capacity-building efforts, combined with the new parliamentary intake following the forthcoming elections in 2015, as a start it is recommended that a capacity assessment of members of parliament and staff in both chambers is undertaken in order to inform capacity-building efforts and to act as a baseline for subsequent monitoring of capacity development.

Taking a longer-term view, donors should prepare themselves to commit to supporting long-term capacity building measures tailored to the roles and responsibilities of the two chambers, as well as offering the availability of post-training support either in-house or from an external party. These efforts might also provide an opportunity for civil society groups with particular expertise in this area (if available) to offer training support. Another challenge is that Somalilanders lacked specificity in regards to their training needs.

2. Strengthen capacity for Executive oversight

In line with participant observations regarding the challenges of effectively overseeing and holding the executive to account and donor interest in pursuing anti-corruption activities in the country, the oversight function of parliament requires serious attention. The current government's political willingness to pursue anti-corruption efforts (including the establishment of the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Commission) presents an opportunity to

capitalize on this potentially favorable political environment to strengthen horizontal accountability between parliament and the executive. While it is recognized that working in this area will be challenging given parliament's apparent lack of power to act on the results of its scrutinizing activities, it is recommended that donors lead a detailed review of the relationship between the two, particularly in regard to the following areas:

- Recruitment of committee members (see internal organization and management);
- Questioning of the executive in the chamber and/or committee rooms by parliamentarians;
- Committee review of policy, programs and operations, where executive witnesses can be called, where penalties for contempt and perjury apply, and where there is an obligation for these to be visibly dealt with in plenary;
- Committee scrutiny of regulations and policies to ensure that all sub-ordinate regulations are consistent with parliamentary acts; and
- The receipt and review of audit reports.

Donors are advised to prioritize the strengthening of the Public Accounts Committee and to support civil society groups in working with committees to provide data and disseminate findings. In addition, donors have a key role to play in supporting financial transparency by ensuring aid flows to the central government are made accessible to and scrutinized by parliament.

3. Create buy-in to parliamentary representatives in the short-term

An issue relevant to each of the sub-categories here is that there is a lack of public buy-in to the work of parliament at both the national and local level, and this manifests in arguably negative working relations between parliament and their constituents. Though improving levels of public buy-in to the work of parliament was not prioritized by workshop participants, it was deemed to be a major problem in terms of their being a lack of financial resources (see enabling environment) to “bring development” to constituencies and therefore earn the trust and respect of the public. With parliament facing its second democratic elections (at least to the House of Representatives), parliament also faces problems regarding its legitimacy. While there is a careful balance to be struck between keeping expectations of members of parliament at a realistic level yet also ensuring that citizens do have a degree of “buy-in” to elected representatives and parliament, it is recommended that donors consider the feasibility of the constituency development fund model in order to provide a number of “quick wins” in the aftermath of the 2015 election. There are a host of challenges associated with the constituency development fund model and these need to be carefully mitigated.

4. Improve human resourcing policies and procedures

The need to formalize the way in which Parliament recruits parliamentary staff was deemed a needed area of reform by both workshop participants and interviewees, who cited concerns over the recruitment of staff who lacked relevant skills or a clear job description. In line with the view that there is a serious mismatch of actual skills to staff roles, it is recommended that guidelines be established for the recruitment of staff members with the aim of recruiting staff with the necessary skills to undertake the roles for which they were recruited. Importantly,

these changes depend on the existence of clearly demarcated roles and responsibilities of staff members, including job descriptions.

5. *Strengthen internal reporting and archiving systems*

There is a need to improve internal reporting and archiving systems in order to provide a basis for greater communication, access to information, transparency and historical accuracy; and while this area was not a major priority for workshop participants, it did emerge as a key concern during interviews. The nexus of this is strengthening the existing Hansard system which currently has few staff who have received sufficient training. Arguably, this is an ideal window of opportunity to utilize the foreign study trip approach in order to expose staff to Hansard reporting systems. Thinking more widely, there is a considerable level of support among members of parliament in both chambers to improve how information about the work of parliament is gathered and stored in a central database, shared through regular parliamentary gazettes or bulletins, and made available to the public (thereby linking with the strategic communications sub-category). To an extent, addressing weaknesses in internal communications will facilitate better external communications, while also helping to promote a better relationship between the two chambers.

6. *Address the skills-remit 'mismatch' within the Guurti*

In addition to the need to clarify the arrangements for (s)electing *Guurti* members, on the basis of interviews it is further recommended that the apparent “mismatch” between the widening role and remit of the *Guurti* and the entry requirements for members is addressed. The two entry points here are to either review the remit of the *Guurti* in order to ensure their remit matches members’ skillset, or to review entry requirements in order to ensure that the chamber possesses adequate capacity to review and draft legislation.

Independent of which route is taken, there is a further need to revisit the *Guurti*’s “traditional” functions that relate directly to peace and security and ensure that the chamber is able to fulfill this important role. The most significant challenge facing *Guurti* members in this regard is their lack of transportation, and, increasingly, a lack of legitimacy for members who are in post not through election but by inheritance. Nevertheless, in a context where peace and security is a major concern, particularly in the east of the country, the *Guurti* offers a sensible entry point for pursuing localized dispute resolution.

7. *Address problems relating to leadership structures within parliament*

Although there was a level of disagreement between members of parliament and members of parliamentary leadership of the House of Representatives, it would appear that there are a number of issues relating to the committee structure that need to be addressed. In particular, participants were keen to emphasize the apparent lack of power the heads of committees possess when executing their functions. The high level of concern regarding the apparent “dictatorship of the speaker” within the lower house is concerning and requires further investigation, in line with strengthening the capacity of committees to fulfill their oversight function (see below).

This also relates to a wider issue of how roles and responsibilities of various actors within parliament are defined, communicated and understood, with a high demand from members of

parliament to ensure this occurs. As parliament is approaching elections and a new intake of members of parliament (at least in the lower chamber), entry points such as a detailed manual setting out working guidelines, procedures and protocol would be opportune. It would also fulfill the dual role of communicating to the public what they can expect of parliament.

8. *Strategic, indirect support to women in the public arena*

The political climate appeared ripe for change in 2010 during President Silanyo's electoral campaign, where he promised to introduce a women's quota in parliament, however momentum for greater inclusion appears to have subsided. The enhancement and widening of women's participation in the political life of the country still has support, particularly from civil society groups, yet this issue was not prioritized by workshop participants, who were predominantly male, and was thought by interviewees to be an issue over which Somali social and cultural norms are too predominant to overcome.

While it does appear that direct support of women's participation – for instance supporting women candidates in elections or advocating for legal change – may prove too difficult for the time being, it is recommended that this issue not be shelved but instead donors consider pursuing less direct ways of supporting women to participate in politics through incremental steps towards promoting the longer-term acceptance of women in positions of authority. These approaches include supporting women's groups (informal and formal) to engage with members of parliament at the local level and supporting the creation of women-only staff positions in local councils to act as a focal point for women in their locality while also increasing the visibility and acceptance of women in professional life.

Opportunities for Future Support

Opportunity 1: Support to parliament needs to engage more on “political” issues such as executive accountability to parliament and not treat capacity building as a panacea.

Somalilander priorities clearly lay in the areas of internal parliamentary processes and in reforming parts of the constitution. While these areas are more difficult to influence and understand, they are major barriers to change in other areas. Support to parliament needs to engage more on “political” issues such as executive accountability to parliament and not treat capacity building as a panacea.

Opportunity 2: Future support to the Somaliland parliament should also include assistance to the *Guurti*.

It is easy for support to focus on the House of Representatives, but as the upper chamber has an important historical precedent, the *Guurti* also needs to be considered, both in terms of capacity-building and in addressing constitutional questions relating to its remit and the election/selection of members.

Opportunity 3: Support programs to improve member of parliament-constituent relations.

The wider legitimacy of the Somaliland parliament rests on both houses being able to instill trust in the institution among Somalilanders in the communities members represent. As the decentralization process progresses, this relationship is all the more important given the remit of members of parliament to scrutinize local service delivery.

Opportunity 4: Explicitly consider how parliament relates to wider governance-support projects.

In relation to the above point, parliamentary concerns could be mainstreamed into all governance-related projects by considering their relation to and impact on parliament. In this way, donors may be able to achieve wider-reaching impact within governance programs. Parliament should not be considered in isolation, despite being formally separated from the executive, and thus donors should bear in mind how particular governance projects impact the workings and effectiveness of parliament – in both positive and negative ways.

Opportunity 5: Support programs that equip Somaliland civil society organizations with the necessary skills and knowledge to support both houses of parliament.

While civil society may have the capacity, through its prior and current receipt of donor programming, to organize around an issue of concern, there is little to no influence by civil society currently on parliament’s processes, debates or decisions. Support to civil society needs to expand its capacity to engage, provide information to, and influence parliament (as well as the executive). Donors should look for opportunities to jointly work with both parliament and civil society to, for example, hold cooperative issue-based forums or to partner in the development of policies or legislation.

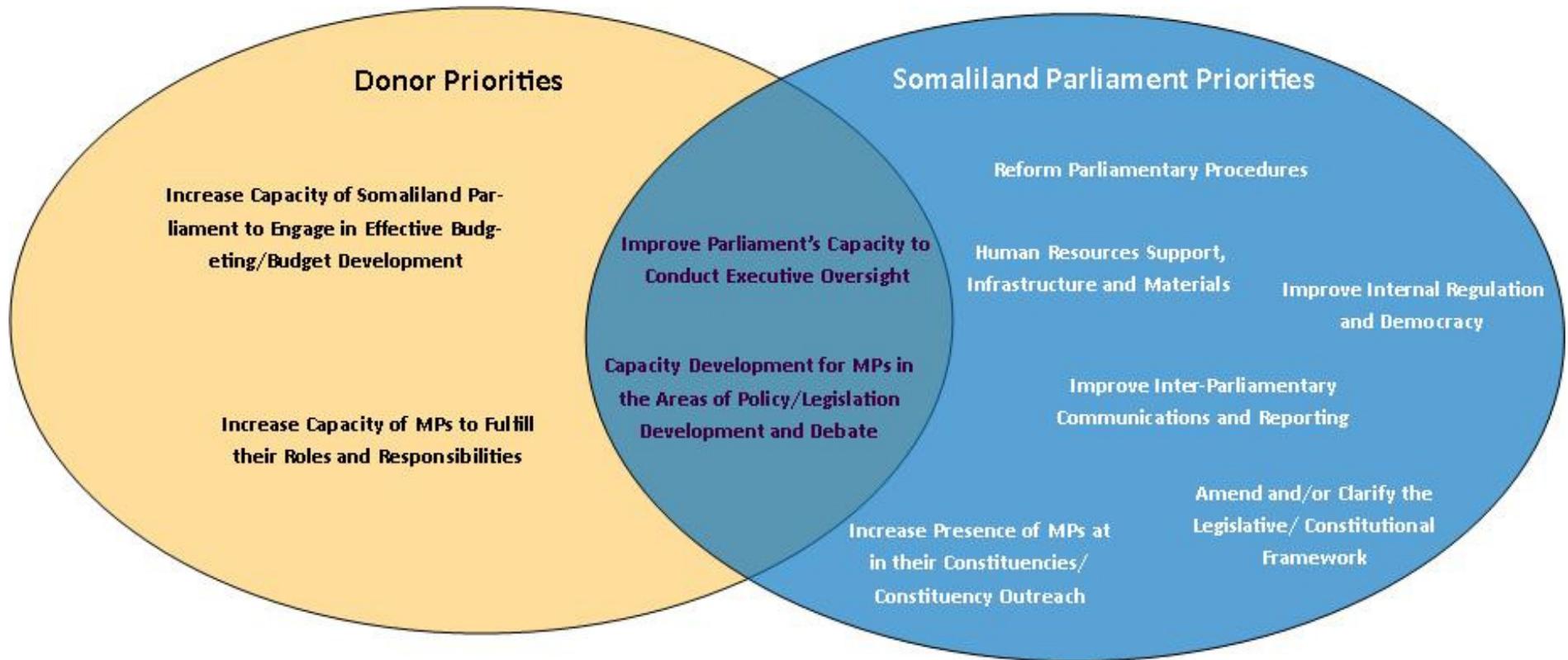
Opportunity 6: The design of programs to support parliament must involve wide public consultations, ideally co-facilitated by parliamentary, governmental and civil society representatives.

The priorities identified by workshop participants and interviewees, discussed above, do not take into account the views and perspectives of “ordinary” citizens. The subsequent design of programs to support parliament must involve wide consultation with the citizenry, as well as partnership with civil society organizations.

Opportunity 7: Explore opportunities for parliament to develop partnerships (formal or informal) with organizations that provide resources and support to members of parliament around the world.

There are a number of parliamentary-oriented organizations that the Somaliland parliament could partner with, both formally and informally. Parliament should be supported to explore new links with organizations such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption and the Canadian Parliamentary Center.

Opportunity Map



EXECUTIVE AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Overview

In contrast with its southern neighbor, Somaliland has received international praise for its relative stability and good governance, and is seen as a model of democratic progress in the region. However, 20 years after the establishment of the country's first civilian administration during the Grand Borama Conference,¹²² Somaliland's governing structures are still under-resourced and lacking clarity in their respective roles and responsibilities. Importantly, the Borama Conference shaped the future of Somaliland's governing architecture by providing for the establishment of local administrations, headed by appointed regional governors and district mayors elected by district councilors. In accordance with the 2001 constitution, these administrations became elected local councils following Somaliland's first ever local council elections in 2002.

For this reason, the legitimacy of the Somaliland presidential system is arguably inextricably bound to the success of local governance, with high public expectations placed on decentralization to deliver basic services in a country that has suffered considerably due to civil war. The last ten years have also seen Somaliland's governance landscape equally distracted and shaped by elections characterized more by sub-clan politicking than issues of concern to the public, at the local, parliamentary and presidential levels.¹²³ A key challenge moving forward is for Somaliland governing institutions to focus on the everyday business of governing and to establish ways of working in between elections, which take up considerable financial and human resources.

Legal Context and Background

The basis of the local and national governance structure is enshrined in the 2001 Somaliland constitution,¹²⁴ itself based on the national charter arising out of the 1993 Borama Conference in which a decentralized system of governance was laid out. Under the constitution, Somaliland has a republican form of government consisting of three branches: the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. Each branch exercises independently the exclusive powers accorded to it under the constitution.

The executive branch is headed by the elected president and consists of the president, vice-president and the council of ministers appointed by the president. According to Somaliland's constitution, the president is directly elected for a maximum of two five-year terms and appoints the cabinet.

The decentralized government structure, outlined in the constitution (Articles 109-112) and the *Regions and Districts Self-Administration Law* (Law No. 23 from 2002, as amended in 2007) consists of six regional and 42 district authorities. The administrations are led by regional

¹²² One of a series of conferences orchestrated by the country's traditional leaders, the *Guurti*. See parliament section for more information on the *Guurti*.

¹²³ See political party section for more details.

¹²⁴ In 2000, a 45-member committee appointed jointly by the president and parliament came up with a commonly acceptable draft constitution. A referendum was held on May 31, 2001, with 97 percent in favor. Those who were less in favor were on the disputed Puntland border in Sool in the east.

governors appointed by the president¹²⁵ and district mayors elected by the district councils. Nineteen of the districts have elected district councils, two have appointed mayors but no councils,¹²⁶ while the remaining smaller “Grade D” districts have not yet been officially ratified by parliament and, since the 2007 amendments to the *Regions and Districts Self-Administration Law*, are known as “temporary administrative districts” until their assessments are completed by the government, their boundaries delineated and their status is confirmed by both houses.¹²⁷

The constitution also outlines bottom-up accountability structures at the local level (Article 111). These arrangements are more clearly articulated in the *Regions and Districts Self-Administration Law* (Law No. 23) which provides the Ministry of Interior with responsibility for overseeing local authorities, and relevant sector ministries with responsibility for overseeing specific service delivery in their respective sectors. Importantly, under Law No. 23, responsibility for the provision of key services (such as health, education, water) is given to local authorities. The legal framework for local and presidential elections is found in the *Presidential and Local Elections Law* (Law No. 20/2001), dealing with issues of the local council’s powers, electoral procedures, and eligibility for candidacy. This law has undergone a series of amendments, including a reduction in the minimum age for contesting a local election, which was reduced from 35 to 25 prior to the 2012 local elections and a shift towards an open list proportional representation system in the local elections.

Efforts to advance decentralization and reform governance at a local level face a number of problems. These include:

- *Inadequate legal frameworks:* A major issue in relation to governance in Somaliland is that the decentralization process is not currently defined in a single piece of legislation, but in the constitution and a number of secondary pieces of legislation. While responsibility for services and revenue mobilization is provided in this legislation, there are a number of shortcomings:
 - The relationship between local and central government is unclear, with existing legislation failing to provide sufficient detail of how decentralization works in practice, as well as failing to provide guidance in instances where jurisdiction is unclear and two levels of government clash, such as land management and taxation;
 - Secondary laws, intended to grant the regional and local authorities adequate administrative, fiscal and political powers to provide basic services and economic development for their communities, have not been implemented due to a lack of political will and resources;

¹²⁵ In February 2013 the president caused controversy by issuing a presidential decree which saw a major reshuffle of regional governors.

¹²⁶ Due to security concerns, two of these districts did not hold elections in 2012.

¹²⁷ According to Article 7 (e) of the *Regions and Districts Law 2002*: “With the exception of the residents of Hagal who shall vote in the District of Berbera of the Sahil Region, all the residents of the new (Grade D) districts shall cast their votes in the first local elections for the local councils of the districts from which the new districts have been gouged out of.”

- Realities on the ground further dictate that the priorities of social and political culture often take precedent to the written law, meaning that the law is, in practice, rather malleable and often seen as optional, particularly at the local level;
- Many officials at both the national and local levels are unaware of the legal regulations which form the basis of their mandate, nor is there much appetite to seek clarification from superiors.
- *Local government fiscal autonomy:* Local governments have insufficient resources to provide basic services. Local councils point to difficulties in collecting tax revenue. Law No. 12/2000 on unified tariffs for local governments limits their authority to generate revenue through taxation at the local level despite bestowing a significant degree of fiscal authority on local administrations. However, all fiscal authority granted to local administrations is subject to approval by the Ministry of Interior. Further, local administrations reportedly face challenges in generating revenue due to a lack of information and database of residents, a lack of proper accounting systems, unqualified tax collectors, and an unwillingness and/or inability to pay taxes on the part of residents.
- *Local council election vetting processes:* Some commentators have suggested that both party and the National Electoral Commission vetting procedures during the 2002 and 2012 elections were not adequate, resulting in elected officials who lack competence in office.¹²⁸
- *Representation of women and marginalized groups:* Somaliland's governance structures are thought to discriminate against women and marginalized groups, such as the Harti clan and young people. Though there are signs that social norms are changing following the 2012 local elections, in which the participation of women and youth increased, it is thought that sustained change to Somaliland culture will be challenging. Women are often less educated than men and thus less likely to compete for jobs; they also face widespread discrimination when they attempt to enter public life. A particular issue for women in elected positions is the pertinent question of "whose" clan they represent: theirs or their husband's. Often, women are seen to be full members of neither, and therefore not able to represent their community.

Actors

Key figures in the local government structure include the following:

- A regional governor in each of the six regions, appointed by presidential decree.
- A district executive secretary in each district, appointed by ministerial decree. The position of the district executive secretary is controversial, for according to Article 45 of Law No. 23 the district executive secretary is an official from the Ministry of Interior. The presence of an appointed official within the upper echelons of local government might be seen to undermine the independence of local government institutions, particularly given that the position wields significant power.
- A mayor in each district, elected by district council members from their ranks, acts as the head of the district council.

¹²⁸ Yusuf, Haroon. *Somaliland Pre-Election Consultation*. Rep. Hargeisa: Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum, 2012. Print.

- District councilors, directly elected by the public. The number of district council members per district differs depending on the grade of the district, which is in turn determined by parliament and the government. The number of council members per district grade has been set as follows:¹²⁹

The Capital City, Hargeisa	25 members
Grade A Districts	21 members
Grade B Districts	17 members
Grade C Districts	13 members
Grade D Districts	9 members ¹³⁰

Resources

According to the *National Development Plan*, the government of Somaliland anticipates that nearly 11 percent of its proposed budget will be allocated to governance, including the security and justice sectors. Due to the cross-cutting nature of governance, it is difficult to delineate specific budget lines within sector budgets such as health, education and water/sanitation:

Sector	Amount (USD)	Percent Allocation
Health	26,000,000	31.2
Livelihoods	21,100,000	25.3
Education	18,100,000	21.7
Governance	9,000,000	10.8
Water/Sanitation	7,000,000	8.4
Private	1,600,000	1.9
Infrastructure	500,000	0.6
Total	83,300,000	100

Local government revenues continue to lag behind service delivery responsibilities, and despite claims that Somaliland’s local administrations have succeeded in sustaining themselves despite limited external assistance,¹³¹ the reality is that a lack of financial and human resources acts as a major hindrance to the delivery of social services to communities.

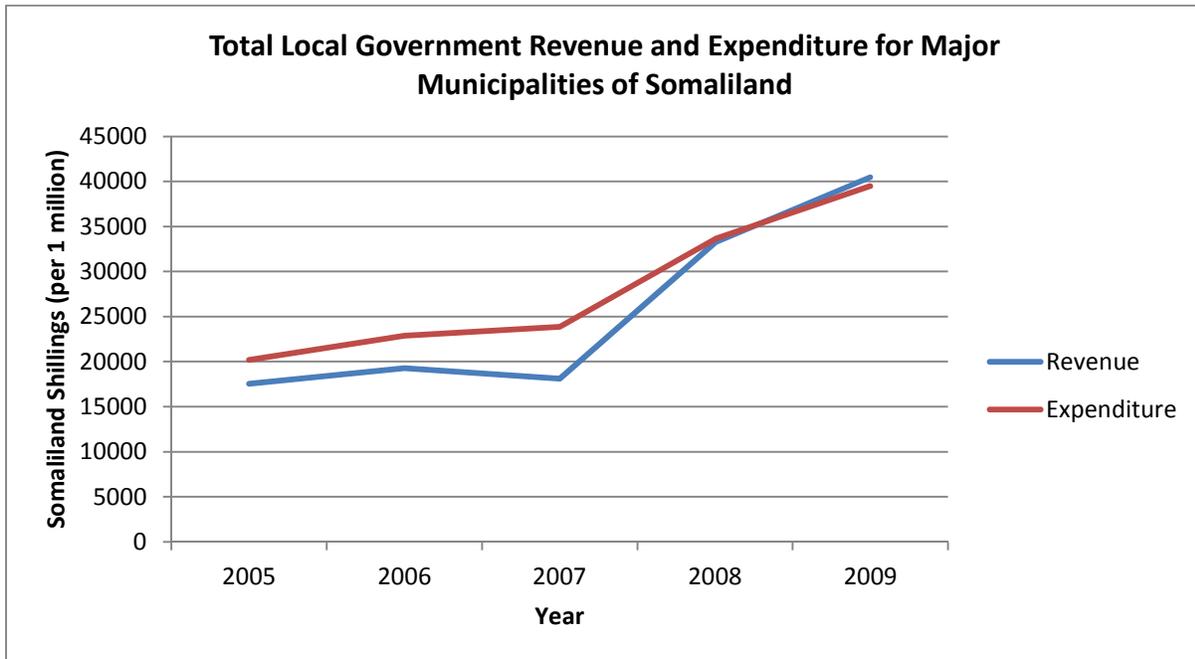
Local governance takes up more than \$75 million of the *National Development Plan* budget, of which more than \$65 million is for “Strengthening Regional and District Council Administrations.” In 2011, for the first time, Somaliland executed fiscal state transfers to six districts following the establishment of a fiscal state transfer mechanism. However the fund transfers are irregular and the transfer system does not support all districts equally.

¹²⁹ According to Article 4 of the *2001 Presidential and Local Council Elections Law* and Article 25 of the 2002 law.

¹³⁰ 19 Grade D districts are yet to be constituted.

¹³¹ Eubank, Nicholas. *Working Paper 198 January 2010 Peace-Building without External Assistance: Lessons from Somaliland*. Working paper no. 198. Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development, 2010. Print.

Salaries, allowances for staff and security absorb the majority of local government resources, often over sixty percent. Levies and fees collected rarely exceed \$2.00 per inhabitant per year in rural areas, and \$4.50 per inhabitant per year in urban areas, well below the norm for least developed countries of between \$20 and \$50 per capita. Government data shows that between 2005-2009, local government revenue and expenditures steadily increased:¹³²



Alliances and Strategies

The key Somaliland government strategy is the Somaliland *National Development Plan 2012-2017*, for which the Ministry of Interior is officially responsible. There are two relevant pillars within the strategy, the governance and social pillars, which map out the government of Somaliland's priorities in these two areas. The most important donor strategies are the UN's cross-Somalia plans for the 2013-2017 Joint Program on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery Phase II and the United Nations Somali Assistance Strategy 2011-2015.

National Development Plan

Under the governance pillar, the main priority area relating to democratic governance is support to decentralization, which accounts for more than \$75 million (over two-thirds) of the estimated budget required in this area. Priorities identified include:¹³⁴

- **Local Governance:** Decentralization is the principal priority, including the promotion of public dialogue over the decentralization process, stepping up fiscal and functional decentralization and improving public expenditure management at the local level.

¹³² Republic of Somaliland. Ministry of National Planning and Development. *Somaliland in Figures*. Hargeisa. 2010. Web. <http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland_in_Figures_20010.pdf>.

¹³⁴ This excludes justice and human rights, which are not being considered as part of this report.

- **Foreign Relations Sector:** The over-arching priority is international recognition, with other priorities including the strengthening of regional and international security cooperation and the creation of a favorable environment for international trade and investment.
- **Good Governance and Anti-corruption Sector:** Following the creation of the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Commission¹³⁵, its priorities are to promote good governance by developing an anti-corruption legal framework and policies, assisting institutions in adopting principles of good governance and investigating corruption cases.
- **Civil Service Sector:** The civil service commission, which is mandated to take responsibility for establishing an efficient and effective civil service, has prioritized “right-sizing” and consolidating staff in public institutions and establishing the competence and qualification of civil servants. The principal priorities of the Civil Service Institute, which was established as an autonomous human resource development institution, are to both build its capacity and to train civil servants to improve public service performance and leadership.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations Sector:** The main priority here is ensuring better coordination among NGOs and the government to avoid unnecessary duplication and ensuring alignment between the priorities of the *National Development Plan* and international development programs.

Under the social pillar, the relevant priority across the various areas is building the capacity of ministries and decentralized offices to provide adequate services. Particular attention is paid to youth development and the provision of technical vocational training, the establishment of basic healthcare in rural areas, and the introduction of district health care management systems to six selected districts.

UN Strategies

The United Nations Somali Assistance Strategy runs until 2015 and is based on the nationally-owned Somaliland *Reconstruction and Development Plan 2007-2012*.¹³⁶ The strategy is centered around three outcomes: (1) Equitable access to basic services; (2) Poverty reduction through livelihoods and sustainable economic development; and (3) Good governance and human security.

Outcomes one and three are the most relevant to this democratization strategy assessment, with outcome one focusing on support for Somaliland’s institutions to manage and regulate social services and to improve access to quality basic services for all people, vulnerable groups in particular. Outcome three involves the UN promoting a “common approach to local governance systems,”¹³⁷ and encouraging stronger links between civil society organizations and the central authorities. In order to achieve good governance, the UN Development Program, UN

¹³⁵ The Commission existed ‘informally’ prior to this, according to one interviewee, but was formally constituted through law in 2012.

¹³⁶ While the UN Somali Assistance Strategy covers Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia, the core strategy is specific to Somaliland only.

¹³⁷ United Nations. *United Nations Somali Assistance Strategy, 2011-2015*. Print.

Children’s Fund, UN Refugee Agency, UN Population Fund, Internal Organization for Migration, UN Political Office for Somalia and UN Office on Drugs and Crime work together with partners from the Somaliland ministries of national planning and development, justice, interior, labor and social affairs and finance, and the accountant general, auditor general, Civil Service Commission, Civil Service Institute and the Central Bank.¹³⁸

Key relevant sub-outcomes for outcome three are that the Somali people are fairly and inclusively represented in elected and appointed government positions and are able to hold their government accountable, and all branches of government at all levels fulfill their mandate, with an emphasis on strengthening the participation of women, youth and minorities.

Key approaches for achieving outcome three include: support to institutional capacity development through public sector reform, enhanced aid coordination mechanisms, strengthened public finance management and public accounting and auditing systems; the establishment and implementation of participatory budgeting processes; and the inclusion of gender equality and women’s empowerment and new legislation to be developed with the involvement of women, youth and minority groups.

The UN Joint Program on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery II (2013-2017) is a joint program for Somalia by the International Labour Organization, UN Capital Development Fund, UN Development Program, UN Habitat and UN Children’s Fund.¹³⁹ The program is aligned to the programming frameworks of the Somalia Reconstruction and Development Program 2008-2012 and the UN Transition Plan 2008-2009 and builds upon the first phase of the program which ran between 2007 and 2012.

The strategy pursued comprises three outcomes:

- i. **Policy and legal reforms** for functional, fiscal and administrative decentralization that clarify the role of local government and its relations to the central government;
- ii. **Improving local government’s capacity** for equitable service delivery, including training, coordination between districts and increasing local revenue generation and the scope of Local Development Funds; and
- iii. **Improving service delivery** in an equitable and socially-accountable manner, including greater collaboration with NGOs, improved coordination with line ministries and enhanced accountability to constituents.

Future Considerations

In comparison with the wider Somalia context, Somaliland’s governance structure can be viewed as a relatively successful combination of traditional modes of authority and decision-making with institutions representing ‘modern’ democratic ways of governing. Though the major force of tradition – the *Guurti*, or House of Elders – remains within the parliamentary system, Somaliland’s executive and local governance structures have arguably moved (and are

¹³⁸ In addition, parliamentary oversight committees.

¹³⁹ The program receives funds from donors such as the European Union, DFID, Danish International Development Agency, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Italy, Norway and Switzerland.

moving) towards more democratic and participatory models of government. While the full implications of the 2001 constitution are yet to be realized (and indeed understood), it is necessary that these relatively new governance structures are able to meet expectations and be welcomed as legitimate actors in Somaliland's development, particularly at the local level.

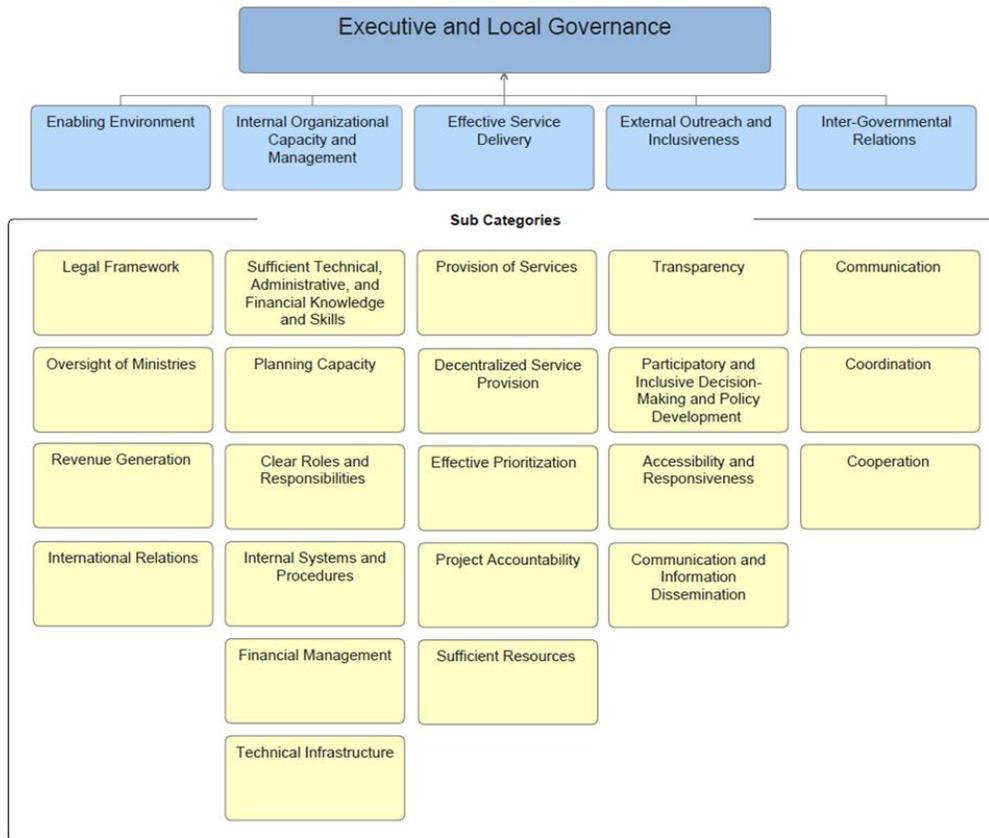
Ultimately, the governance situation throughout Somalia depends on continued progress in both implementing decentralization and establishing a clearer framework to guide this effort. With the reforms in their relative infancy and the newly-elected local councils still fresh in office, expectations need to be realistic. However, without concerted efforts to resolve decentralization's teething problems, the project might lose support from the public.

The government's attempt to integrate NGO activities into its planning strategies has provoked concern among civil society actors. In terms of planning, the NGO Act has been criticized for representing a "backslide" into a further centralization of power by increasing the power of the Ministry of Planning and Development over the NGO sector, and particularly that of international organizations. Despite these legitimate concerns by both national and international NGOs, the law also presents an opportunity, as stated by the government of Somaliland, to share information and harmonize development planning in accordance with the *National Development Plan*.

Somaliland Strategy Analysis Framework: Executive and Local Governance

For the purposes of this democratization strategy assessment, analysis of executive and local governance interests, needs and priorities took place within a framework informed by DFID's capability, accountability and responsiveness framework.

A graphical representation of the Somaliland national and local governance framework is shown below:



This framework includes categories and sub-categories of local and executive governance work, interests and influences, both real and potential in the case of Somaliland. Many of these were not addressed at all by Somalilanders in interviews or workshops due to lack of time, knowledge or perceived prioritization on the part of Somalilander participants, but are nonetheless helpful to identify next-steps, relative priorities and overlap with donor interests.

The top level boxes in light blue identify major categories of executive and local governance influences and internal and external roles and responsibilities. The lower level boxes in yellow identify sub-categories of executive and local governance influences (such as the legal framework) and roles and responsibilities related to each of the major categories. These are general headings and as such comprise a number of different governance influences and activities.

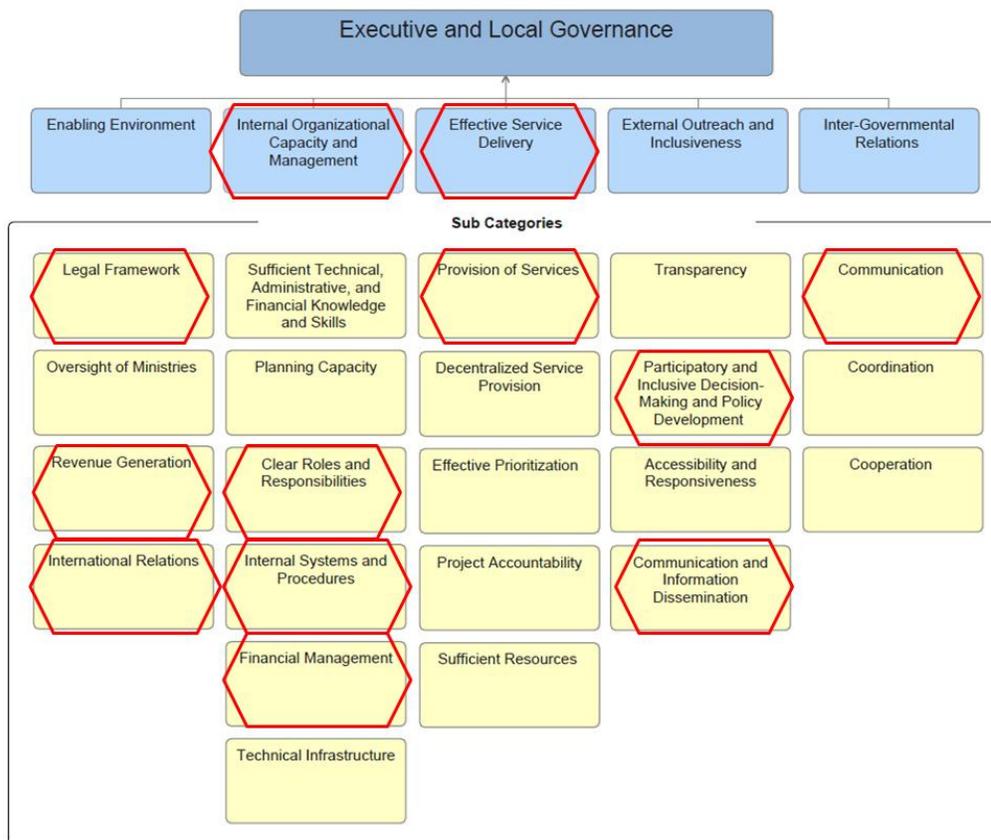
Executive and local governance priorities discussed in the following section are organized by these categories and subcategories. Some subcategories are not discussed; those that are not discussed were not mentioned at all by workshop participants or to a significant degree by interviewees.

Executive and Local Governance Priorities for Democratization

Based on the results of two participatory workshops and numerous interviews with both executive and local government representatives, this section presents a discussion of their priorities for national and local governance support.

Two separate strategy workshops were held on the topic of governance, in addition to individual in-depth interviews. One workshop was held with executive branch leadership and another with local government representatives, including mayors and council members. Priorities for democratization differed slightly between the local government and national executive branch, and within workshop groups there were clear divisions of opinion on the severity of various challenges in Somaliland's governance structure.

The aggregated, prioritized subcategories are highlighted below with red boxes:



It is of interest to compare those subcategories that are prioritized with those subcategories that are not prioritized. Note that those that are not highlighted as high priorities may have been listed as medium priority or low priority, or may not have been mentioned at all by participants. The following section describes the high, medium and low priorities raised by executive and local government representatives within each of these categories in further detail.

Effective service delivery was the highest priority for those in local government because it was understood to be “the reason for the existence of our office” by participants. While service delivery was not prioritized by participants in the executive workshop – who considered both internal organizational capacity and management and the enabling environment to be the areas in most need of support – it was considered an “end goal” that was based on support to other priority areas. According to one participant, “without change at the heart of the structure then service delivery cannot happen at the other end.”

External outreach and inclusiveness was a low priority for both the executive and local government participants, though the content of workshop discussions reflected an underlying concern with the lack of public “buy-in” to government institutions and local councils in particular. Similarly, inter-governmental relations were considered a low priority in both workshops, yet the workshop discussion demonstrated that participants felt that a lack of communication between ministries and between central and local governments was a key challenge to effective governance.

The high priority changes in the high priority categories across the two workshops (service delivery, enabling environment, and internal organizational capacity and management) reflected common concerns about lack of clarity in legal and policy frameworks, most notably in relation to decentralization. Priority changes in the service delivery category¹⁴⁰ were: to “make service delivery responsibilities clearer” in a comprehensive decentralization policy, and to increase public engagement in service delivery by raising awareness of citizens’ rights and responsibilities in relation to local government.

The executive workshop participants, who saw service delivery in terms of the level of capacity of the government, particularly at local level, referred to the need for institutions tasked with delivering services to have the requisite capacity and resources to undertake their work. It is interesting to note that in terms of capacity, the issue of personal skills and knowledge was not prominent; the focus was on ‘external’ constraints and therefore there was little consideration of training requirements.

Effective Service Delivery – High Priority

Across both workshops, participants’ understanding of what a government should do centered upon the provision of services, in which opportunities for local economic development and job creation were included as “services.” Unsurprisingly, for members of local government, service delivery is all the more paramount due to their proximity to end users; councilors spoke of being at the “frontline” of poverty and therefore failing in their jobs if they could not help ease the situation faced by their local communities through the provision of basic services such as sanitation and healthcare. Members of the executive – who are arguably somewhat removed from the “frontline” - were able to conceptualize in more detail the necessary conditions for service delivery to take place, and therefore identified changes in the “structure” of how service delivery is organized and managed.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ From local government workshop participants who prioritized this category.

¹⁴¹ By prioritizing other categories.

Provision of Services

Members of the executive prioritized the building of local and national institutions to deliver services, which is relevant to both the provision of services and effective prioritization subcategories. Participants specifically referred to a “lack of knowledge of local needs and deprivations” within local governments, resulting in services not reaching marginalized areas or resource allocations not being adequate to cover the local population.¹⁴² Local government participants referred to the need for service delivery staff to be more aware of “what service delivery is and what it means for the people receiving the service.”¹⁴³ However, though this was a clear priority for the executive, there were limited specific proposals for what kinds of capacity needed to be built aside from the need for local staff with financial management skills, which was deemed necessary to mitigate corruption at the local level.

The main priority for local government participants in this category was to “strengthen legal and policy frameworks to make service delivery responsibilities clearer,” in the provision of services sub-category, and directly related to the enabling environment and internal organizational capacity and management categories.¹⁴⁴ Participants were in effect lending support to a comprehensive decentralization policy, though this was framed in terms of services. According to one participant representing a local council, “I am told different things by different people and sometimes do not know what to say to my community members about how to access services like sewage clearing. The line ministries have not been clear on how local service delivery works and this makes my – our job – much harder.” This issue was also a priority for the executive, but framed in terms of the legal and constitutional framework (see below).

Internal Organizational Capacity and Management – High Priority

Clear Roles and Responsibilities

This was the top priority category for executive-branch participants,¹⁴⁵ who identified the specific need for the government to establish clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities of ministries and staff within ministries and local government (clear roles and responsibilities sub-category). (The problem of unclear roles and responsibilities – particularly within the context of a decentralized service delivery system – was also captured in the local government workshop as part of the service delivery category.)

The issue of unclear roles and responsibilities was identified as a problem on various levels: 1) in relation to the roles and responsibilities of departments and staff within ministries, which according to one participant, “[is] at the beginning stages of development; we have only just started to think about the different parts of a ministry and who we need in them;” 2) in relation to which ministry takes responsibility for different aspects of policy. According to one interviewee, “if the Ministry of Interior tries to take charge on something then someone else will say it’s not their job – but whose job is it?”; and 3) the delineation of roles and responsibilities between local government, line ministries and the Ministry of Interior. This issue overlaps with

¹⁴² See also internal organizational capacity and management category.

¹⁴³ See also external outreach and inclusiveness category.

¹⁴⁴ Participants felt that this change was part of the service delivery category.

¹⁴⁵ It was a low priority for local government participants.

the subsequent discussion on the legal and constitutional framework sub-category in the enabling environment category.

Financial Management

The capacity to allocate resources and plan effectively at both the national and local levels was a less prominent issue for participants, but came out strongly in interviews as a major barrier to the governing of the country. The lack of capacity to allocate resources based on need within the central government was thought to have a major impact upon local governments, which feel that the difference between “what is being asked from them by the government on one hand, and the resources being allocated to doing their activities on the other is a joke,” in the words of one local government participant. Another interviewee from the eastern part of the country lamented the “unfair” allocation of government resources to areas where there was support for the government’s independence “project.” One interviewee noted that: “When you don’t show the right support for what the government wants, then you risk a low level of resources being allocated to you.”

Relatedly, both participants and interviewees stressed a lack of data which can be used for planning purposes and the need to continue the Ministry of Planning and Development’s current efforts to undertake needs assessments in a number of localities. According to one ministry official, “We don’t have the right information to make decisions about what is best for people. I can give you some statistics but they will not be correct – we just don’t know.” Both obtaining population and sector-specific data for planning purposes and building the government’s statistical capacity in the longer-term are relevant priorities here.

Internal Systems and Procedures

In addition, interviewees also highlighted a lack of established internal systems and procedures for “getting things done” as a major problem within ministries. “Even with the best plans, if there is no guidance for how to approach implementation and everything is done in an ad-hoc manner then things become very difficult,” reported one ministry official during the workshop discussion. Another official highlighted the need to focus on establishing systems and procedures at the central government level before expecting local government to deliver services on any grand scale, “If the central ministry does not know how to get things done, how can the local government?”

Enabling Environment – Medium Priority

This category was the second highest priority of participants at the executive workshop, and in both workshop discussions was understood to be inextricably linked to both internal organizational capacity and management and effective service delivery, thereby making distinctions difficult in some cases.

International Relations

The international relations sub-category was the major priority for participants, with international recognition for Somaliland being ranked the top priority change almost unanimously. This change was understood to be central to the receipt of aid, with one participant commenting that “without being recognized as a sovereign and legitimate government we will not receive the support we need to lay the proper foundations of government – it is a chicken-and-egg situation.” In addition, international recognition could

potentially help create buy-in to the Somaliland government at both local and national levels across the country according to one interviewee, a former local council member in the east of the country, “The problem is that the people in my area already doubt the authority of any Somaliland government, and they [the international community] support this doubt by not recognizing the government either.”

Legal Framework

Participants in the executive workshop were in agreement with local government participants in regard to the need for strengthening of legal and policy frameworks relating to decentralization. Participants talked about “filling the gaps” and “resolving the lack of clarity” in the current legal frameworks that guide decentralization. In particular, participants referred to a “lack of clarity” in both the constitution and the regions and district law (Law No.23), the latter of which in theory gives local government the power to administer basic services (such as health, education, security and water). In practice, however, there is no legal framework specifying how and when these services would be handed down to the local governments.¹⁴⁶ The law is also thought to be unclear regarding tax-collecting responsibilities, both between local councils (for instance where there are disputes over where taxes on trade goods are collected, a common problem according to workshop participants) and between central and local government. A number of participants and interviewees mentioned that the way to resolve many of these issues was to have a comprehensive decentralization policy, an idea which has in the past received support from the international community in the form of a legal consultant drafting an initial policy, according to one high-ranking government official. However, according to one interviewee, these efforts have “fallen to the side” due to a lack of political will.

Revenue Generation

On a related note, local government participants and interviewees stressed the need for “full decentralization of the system in practice,” including both the provision of adequate subsidies from the central government and support to raise their own resources through taxation and partnerships with the private sector. While local councils may lack both experience and skills, it is the lack of necessary resources to develop the local infrastructure that presents the greatest challenge to the newly-elected councils. In the words of one current mayor, “trainings only cannot help but other opportunities should also be created.”

An additional issue to emerge during interviews concerned the need for ministries to be formally established with a legal mandate which sets out their rights and responsibilities, much like the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Commission.¹⁴⁷ For ministries with large reform remits, such as the Ministry of Interior, this could prove a challenge and therefore needs to be addressed through legal means.

Inter-Government Relations – Low Priority

This category was considered a low priority in both workshops, though there is significant overlap between this category and others, notably internal organizational capacity and management. For this reason, issues in this category were discussed as part of the wider

¹⁴⁶ In practice all services with the exception of sanitation come under the authority of the central government.

¹⁴⁷ Fewer in number in terms of workshop participants.

discussion relating to decentralization and the relationship between the local and central governments.

Communication

Importantly, there was wide variation in attitudes towards the adequacy of communications between local and central government, with newly-elected councilors arguing that relations were “excellent” and that government institutions at the two levels “are one and the same,” while mayors were adamant that relations between central and local layers of government are unsatisfactory. According to one participant, the relationship between the central and local governments is “currently unproductive and not helping the progress of decentralization.” The mayors felt that the newly-elected councilors “do not see the problems of communicating with ministries” when there are problems in their respective jurisdictions due to the lack of time the councilors have spent in their roles.

However, interviewees reported that there is no formalized system for communications between the two levels of government, with communications being reactive and ad-hoc. Executive workshop participants identified the need to formalize local-central government communications in order to promote transparency and participation within government.

While the executive participants felt that the priority change in this category was to establish clear roles and responsibilities for government ministries and agencies – an issue placed under the internal organization and management category – the local government participants focused on the need for local government to participate in the central government’s decisions over the allocation of resources. Participants were adamant that at present no mechanism exists to communicate resource needs to the central government and decisions therefore are “made on a whim,” according to one former mayor. Whether or not this is the case, the important point here is that there is a high level of demand for decision-making to be more participatory and include local government.

External Outreach and Inclusiveness – Low Priority

This category was also considered a low priority among participants, who in the words of one official understood external outreach and inclusiveness as “something to consider after the other things are in place.” There was a general agreement among both participants and interviewees – particularly those at the local level – that public demand for engaging with government was weak and that external engagement would only be possible if resources were made available to develop communities. One former mayor spoke of the hatred he felt from the people he represented because he “couldn’t do anything...the government gave me no money to do anything so the people lose trust.” According to a current mayor facing resistance in his community, the solution needs to be investment in infrastructure, “When the people see what you did (tangible achievements), then many people will be on your side.”

Communication and Information Dissemination

Even with a lack of activity in terms of delivering much-needed services, participants felt it important to engage more with the media in order to present a “true face.” Participants prioritized media engagement, particularly at the local government level, in order to communicate the (sometimes limited) activities of government and create a channel through which the public can engage with elected local officials. One mayor remarked, “there is a need

for more mobilization and awareness-raising. There are people who don't accept you or they are against the administration. You will see people who will fight with you when you tell them you want to improve their lives." Another interviewee supported this, emphasizing the need to train journalists on how to cover policy debates and encourage citizens to participate in local and national level discussions on issues that affect them.

Participatory and Inclusive Decision Making and Policy Development

Interviewees commented on the potential for greater engagement with civil society organizations, intellectuals and other "experts" who currently have little or no input into developing policies in order to plug capacity gaps and create public buy-in to the decentralization process.

Priority Opportunities for International Support

Opportunity 1: Support local administrations in mobilizing resources, including opportunities to partner with the private sector to finance service delivery.

In the long-term, it is recognized that local governments must generate their own funds and not only rely on allocations from the central government and, in some cases, local development funds as part of the UN Joint Program on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery. As noted, the overall framework for fiscal decentralization needs comprehensive articulation in order to establish respective tax collection responsibilities (including the resolution of disputes between districts over where taxes should be collected), to establish systems to determine levels of and collect tax payments and (as noted) to ensure public buy-in to the social contract between local government and citizens.

Further, local governments need to be able to explore opportunities to partner with the private sector to finance service delivery and to capitalize on the significant resources of the diaspora. It is essential that local governments are seen as responsible managers of public finances, whether these be derived from government subsidies, local taxes or other sources. Local governments need to be supported in order to establish public financial management systems which have transparency as a key principle. While donors are very unlikely to support the direct transfer of their funds to local administrations, they might consider experimenting with jointly-managed budgets between implementing partners and local government for discrete projects.

Opportunity 2: Support efforts to establish a decentralization policy.

The establishment of a single, comprehensive policy on decentralization is paramount given the perceived lack of clarity in existing legal frameworks and potential for this issue to become a source of tension between local and central governments and therefore a bottleneck to service delivery. A clear policy on decentralization will empower local governments, act as a focus point for planning, achieve clarity on the respective roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government, and serve to provide the public with a coherent statement of what decentralization is and what it means for how they relate to government at both the national and local level. There is a need to determine the current bottlenecks within government in moving

forward with the draft policy, assess what progress has been made and what has best facilitated this progress and obtain the input of civil society organizations and other technical experts in the drafting of a policy. Donors can further assist the government of Somaliland at this stage by indicating their likely level of support for the decentralization process in the long-term.

Opportunity 3: Support efforts to establish legal mandates of ministries.

Related to the need for a single policy on decentralization, the government of Somaliland should be supported to ensure that each ministry has a legal mandate which adequately describes its current roles and responsibilities while also taking into account changes in future remit. This process would help educate the public and ensure that decentralized local offices are seen as legitimate, as well as clarify inter-governmental roles and responsibilities at both horizontal and vertical levels. The UN Joint Program on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery II should, in theory, address this in terms of line ministry and decentralized office responsibilities, but it requires effective prioritizing in practice. The mandate should also set out the structure of ministries, including number of staff and respective job descriptions to act as a basis for recruitment. Again, supporting this requires donors to be in a position to indicate their likely future level of support to the internal organization and function of ministries.

Opportunity 4: Support existing good governance and anti-corruption efforts.

While the issue of anti-corruption did not feature as a priority in workshop discussions, participants showed both commitment to the need for and awareness of accountable and transparent governance, and in the words of one local government participant, “Governments in Africa can be corrupt and not work to the good of their people. It is our job to show a better face than this.” The government of Somaliland itself has prioritized “good governance,” with the creation of the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Commission in 2012. Donors are encouraged to support the commission as it undertakes its primary tasks of public awareness-raising and carrying out investigations into the misuse of public funds, particularly in terms of resourcing local-level efforts through offices, staff and transportation. It is recommended that the work of the commission be monitored carefully in order to assess how effective its work is without the powers of prosecution and to support the Ministry of Justice in working with the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Commission accordingly. It is important that current momentum in this area be sustained if the commission is to establish itself as a powerful force in government.

Opportunity 5: Support capacity for planning, national statistics, research and information gathering.

Somaliland’s capacity for planning is currently weak, largely due to a dearth of data and lack of staff equipped with the necessary analytical tools to use what data exists. Effective planning is currently critical for a number of reasons, the most important being the need for the relevant ministries (Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Interior, sector ministries) to plan how to implement the *National Development Plan*, including planned activities, areas of focus and allocation levels.

The government of Somaliland needs support in two primary areas: national statistical capacity and information sharing and gathering. In relation to the former, support is needed to ensure that ministries are staffed with statistics experts and provided with the necessary software to create and analyze databases of information. In relation to the latter, there needs to be greater sharing of information across government, between local and central governments, and between government and non-governmental organizations. While the NGO law in some ways addresses information-sharing with the government, it is recommended that ministries be supported in order to have dedicated information or communication officers to facilitate this.

Opportunity 6: Support efforts to establish and institutionalize internal systems and procedures.

While there has been support in this area – particularly in regard to internal policies on systems and procedures – a key priority is both the standardization of procedures across ministries and local government offices, particularly in regard to: financial management, communications and information-sharing, and recruitment. Once these standard procedures have been established and understood at the national level, alongside clear roles and responsibilities delineated within an overall decentralization framework, it is imperative that support is then focused on ensuring that systems and procedures are understood and institutionalized at the local government level. This requires the resourcing of designated local staff to take responsibility for leading and managing internal changes and acting as a liaison with counterparts in the central government. It is also recommended that the mandate of the Civil Service Institute be reviewed in order to allow the agency to provide capacity building training in these areas to local government staff, who are currently non-civil servants and therefore do not come under the Institute’s remit.

Opportunity 7: Address lack of public buy-in and engagement to decentralization, including engaging with and sustaining relationships with both the media and CSOs.

While levels of buy-in differ according to political affiliation, proximity to Hargeisa, and level of UN Joint Program on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery support, addressing what appears to be weak public buy-in to local government has emerged as an area which needs consideration. The problem is most acute in the eastern regions, where local governments lack legitimacy due to a wider distrust in the national government. The lack of buy-in has a number of negative impacts, including a reluctance to pay taxes in return for what is seen as poor quality of services delivered, high expectations of what local governments are expected to deliver going unrealized,¹⁴⁸ and relations between constituents and members of parliament being characterized by tension due to anger over a lack of services. The UN’s focus on civic education, transparency and social accountability mechanisms needs to be scaled-up, with local government staffing and procedures linked to the need to both widen and deepen citizen engagement by creating designated public outreach staff posts and ensuring that mechanisms for the reporting and redress of grievances exist.

¹⁴⁸ See parliament section.

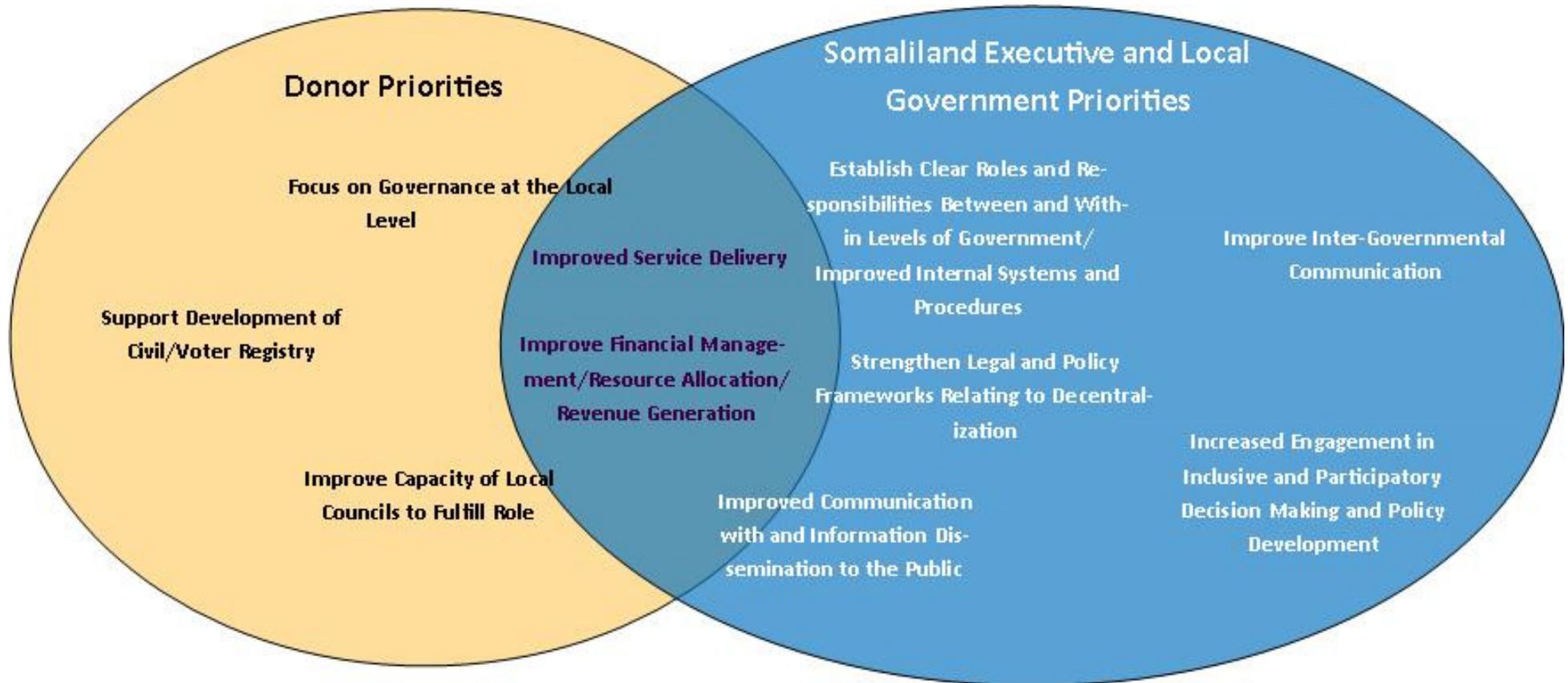
Where real threats of instability exist in the country's eastern region donors may want to explore using "quick win" service delivery projects, such as the quick impact projects used in situations requiring stabilization. More generally it is recommended that national and local governments are supported in finding ways of engaging with and sustaining relationships with both the media and civil society organizations, both of which can play a pivotal role as mediators between the government and citizenry. A further option which as yet appears to have gone unexplored is to capitalize on the existence of district councils as a locus point for engagement with higher levels of government due to their perceived close relations with and "embeddedness" in local communities.¹⁴⁹

Opportunity 8: Support efforts at the grassroots level to increase the participation of women and youth in local decision making processes.

Though this was not a common priority among Somalilanders it is a key focus for donors and implementing organizations and is arguably central to the achievement of a truly democratic government. Participation of women and youth is deepening, as evidenced by the recent local elections, and in accordance with the need to move "beyond" elections it is recommended that recent gains are turned into sustained achievements. The participation of women and youth is critical to gaining public buy-in and ensuring that local and national development is planned in a way that includes their perspectives. The existence of relatively strong umbrella NGO groups representing women and youth provides an obvious entry point for sustained and meaningful engagement, though it is recommended that local level engagement is concentrated on the grassroots.

149 Interviewee.

Opportunity Map



POLITICAL PARTIES

Overview

A little over ten years since Somaliland's multiparty system was launched, political parties have struggled to create distinct platforms, consolidate party structures, conduct outreach to and represent constituents and resource these efforts. Further complicating their development is a legal framework that guarantees no competition from new political organizations until their ten-year term as national parties is complete, successive delays to parliamentary and presidential elections for political and technical reasons and traditional political structures based on a complex web of sub-clan systems.

Political parties have accomplished much in the ten years since their reintroduction into Somaliland politics during the local council elections of 2002. The last time political parties had competed was during the 1969 Somalia-wide (of which Somaliland was then part) national assembly elections, in which 62 parties contested the vote. That experience soured public attitude towards political parties, as elected representatives quickly switched parties to join the governing party, leading to a one-party state, and the parliament came to be seen as a struggle over parochial clan concerns.¹⁵⁰ As one author notes of the period, "The increasingly venal struggle among the elite eventually led to the collapse of Somalia's parliamentary democracy."¹⁵¹

Today, Somaliland political parties see themselves as important contributors to Somaliland's national development by bridging the political transition from clans to a national democratic process. This transition will be long-term; democratic transitions in other countries have shown that reforming existing power structures is a complex process, susceptible to setbacks and subject to the influence of larger political, economic and security matters.

In the strategy workshops and in-depth interviews that formed part of this assessment, political party members and leadership enunciated an understanding of the many challenges they face and put forth ideas to address and/or mitigate them. While political parties themselves must take responsibility for their future development, there is significant opportunity for international support to advance political parties as modern political organizations capable of representing and advancing the needs of constituents. Moreover, political parties expressed as high priority the need for access to international best practices from political parties that have succeeded in similar circumstances elsewhere.

Given the formative stage of political party development in Somaliland, there is high value for money in both quantitative and qualitative components; political parties are eager for assistance, and there is a dearth of non-partisan international support providing it. As noted in the international donor history and priorities section, IRI is one of the only organizations to work with political parties in Somaliland on political party development, and has done so since 2002 with funding from USAID and NED. As one former IRI staff member noted:

¹⁵⁰ Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 35. 217.

¹⁵¹ Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 35.

Yes, we have been working with political parties in Somaliland for some time, with lots of international examples, but the scale of the problem far exceeds the resources [IRI has been able to receive]. Political parties are at the core [of the democratic system]; they are the only ones to formally represent and advocate on behalf of constituent interests. There seems to be plenty of funding for other institutions, especially civil society, but not nearly enough, even relatively speaking, for political party development work. There is a real asymmetry.

Legal Context and Background

The 2001 Somaliland constitution describes a multiparty system, but one limited to three national parties. Somaliland's constitutional limit of three official political parties is meant to ensure that parties represent large portions of the population, rather than having a proliferation of smaller parties that are clan or regionally-based.

The first local council elections in 2002, contested by six political organizations,¹⁵² paved the way for three official political parties to compete in the 2005 parliamentary elections; these three political organizations had to win the most votes nationwide and to achieve at least 20 percent of the vote in at least four of Somaliland's six regions.¹⁵³ These successful organizations became official political parties: the United Democratic Party (UDUB), Kulmiye and the Justice and Welfare Party (UCID). In the subsequent 2005 parliamentary elections, contested by only these three political parties, UDUB won approximately 39.0 percent of the vote (33 seats), Kulmiye received approximately 34.1 percent of the vote (28 seats), and UCID received approximately 26.9 percent of the vote (21 seats).

The second local council elections were slated to take place five years after the first, in 2007, but were postponed until 2012 for various political and technical reasons. In addition, the parliamentary elections slated for 2010 were postponed to 2013, and once again to 2015. The lack of an adequate voter registry was a significant factor in both electoral postponements.

In the meantime, the presidential election, delayed since 2002, was held in 2010, and was the first direct presidential election to be held in Somaliland. Prior to this, the president had been selected by conferences of clan elders, beginning with the 1993 Borama Conference. Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo, from the Kulmiye party, succeeded Dahir Riyale Kahin, from UDUB, in a relatively peaceful change of power. As noted in a report by Chatham House, "Overall, Somaliland achieved an election and a transfer of power that many more established democracies would struggle to emulate, and none in the Horn of Africa could match."¹⁵⁴ Riyale had served as president of Somaliland since the death of President Muhammad Ibrahim Egal in 2002.

¹⁵² The six political associations to compete in the 2002 local council elections were UDUB, Kulmiye, UCID, Sahan, Hormod and Asad.

¹⁵³ Simkin, Paul, and Paul Crook, comps. *Report on the Somaliland Local Elections Held on 15 December 2002*. Rep. N.p.: European Union, n.d. Print.

¹⁵⁴ Walls, Michael, and Sally Healy. *Another Successful Election in Somaliland*. Issue brief. London: Chatham House, 2010. Print.

Opening the space to new political entrants (outside of the three official political parties – Kulmiye, UDUB and UCID) grew to become a priority issue, and was advanced vocally by many civil society groups, in addition to being included in Kulmiye’s 2010 presidential campaign platform. President Silanyo created a committee in 2011¹⁵⁵ made up of political parties, intellectuals, civil society and traditional and religious leaders to provide recommendations. Among other things, the committee recommended that new political associations be allowed to register and compete in the subsequent local council elections. In 2011, Somaliland’s electoral laws were correspondingly amended, namely through the passage of the *Regulation of Political Associations and Parties Law* No. 14/2011,¹⁵⁶ allowing new political associations to be formed to challenge the three traditional parties in local council elections and therefore compete to be one of the three approved parties going forward.

After the change in electoral laws, 15 political associations applied to compete in local council elections, but nine were disqualified by the Registration of Political Associations and Approval of Political Parties Committee for failing to meet necessary legal requirements. The Registration of Political Associations and Approval of Political Parties Committee disqualification of the nine associations was criticized by the groups as being non-transparent. In explaining its decision, the committee stated that each of the disqualified groups failed to open offices in all regions of Somaliland and failed to provide evidence that they had at least 1,000 members in each region.¹⁵⁷

Thus, a total of six new groups were formally accredited as political associations in time to compete in the 2012 local council elections: Waddani– a faction that split from UCID to form its own association – Xaqsoor, Dalsan, Rays, Ummada and Nasiye (Nasiye however, withdrew from the elections prior to submitting a candidate list). After its failure to retain the presidency and other internecine conflict, UDUB split into competing factions and decided not to participate in the 2012 local council elections. As a result, local council elections were contested by the existing UCID and Kulmiye parties, and five new political associations: Umadda, Dalsan, Rays, Waddani and Xaqsoor.

In the 2012 local council elections, Kulmiye and UCID received the first and third most votes, respectively, thereby retaining their status as national parties; Kulmiye won approximately 30 percent of the vote, and UCID approximately 13 percent. Political association Waddani received the second-most votes, with approximately 20 percent of the total, thereby becoming the third, official national party. These three will be the only official national parties for the next ten years, until their terms expire and local council elections determine the political parties for the subsequent term.

It is to be noted that while these three parties are the only official parties, parliamentary elections have yet to be held under the new political framework, and the parliament includes

¹⁵⁵ *Reflections and Lessons of Somaliland's Two Decades of Sustained Peace, Statebuilding and Democratization*. Publication. Vol. 2. Hargeisa: SORADI, 2012. Print, p. 44.

¹⁵⁶ The Regulation of Political Associations and Parties Law was passed by the House of Representatives on July 31, 2011, and the House of Elders on August 13, 2011. President signed it on August 20, 2011, and its subsequent amendments were signed by the president on December 13, 2011.

¹⁵⁷ The nine associations were disqualified due to failures in meeting the office per region, and/or 1,000 delegates per region, requirements.

members who were elected as part of the now-defunct UDUB or who split from UCID to form Waddani.

Actors

Political party actors include the three current official national parties, Kulmiye, Waddani and UCID, and are influenced by clan politics and the Somaliland diaspora.

Kulmiye Party

Kulmiye obtained its public appeal from its chairman's, now President Ahmed Silanyo's, credentials as Somali National Movement leader during the liberation struggle. Now the incumbent political party, Kulmiye won the presidency in 2010, and went on to receive the majority of votes during the 2012 local council elections. During the 2012 election Kulmiye was accused by competing political associations of poll rigging (specifically, destroying valid ballots and discarding ballot boxes) and use of force. Upon winning the presidency, Silanyo relinquished the party chairmanship to his deputy, Muse Bihi Abdi, who has remained chairman since then. In April 2012 the former deputy chairman of Kulmiye, Abdirahman Abdiqadir, was expelled abruptly from the party in response to his alleged dissension to some of Silanyo's policies.

Waddani Party

Waddani, or Somaliland National Party, was formed by former members of UCID who, in 2012, seceded from the party to form their own political association as a result of internal conflict. The party is headed by the speaker of parliament, Mr. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi Irro.

Justice and Welfare Party (UCID)

The formation of UCID in 2001 was largely a result of ongoing talks among members of the Somaliland diaspora, particularly those concentrated in the Scandinavian countries. Many of the party's leaders and supporters have experience studying, working or living in western Europe. As a result of the Scandinavian influence, the party's interests tend to align with those of western European parties. The party's western characteristics coexist, though, with a blend of traditional Islamist values. Faisal Ali Warabe, now the chairman of the party, is largely responsible for its formation and early development. After internecine conflict, the party lost a significant membership base to Waddani, and came in third in the 2012 local council elections.

Clans

The development of a national, multiparty system was intended to move the country from a clan-based political system to a more national and democratic one.¹⁵⁸ As described by one high ranking political party official during this assessment:

...parties have [played] a very vital role in the peace and stability of the country, development and reconstruction of Somaliland. We were people that are based upon a clan system, who used to elect based on clan. More often the clan elders [were] elected among the leader of the community, therefore it was the last time

¹⁵⁸ *A Vote for Peace II: A Report on the 2010 Somaliland Presidential Election Process*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2012. Print, p. 1-2.

in 1997 when the biggest clan assembly in Hargeisa that clans...decided to shift from the clan based system to multi-party system.

To encourage the development of a more national political agenda and reduce the prevalence of clan identity in national politics, the legal framework requires that to qualify as a national party, a political association or existing party must achieve, during local council elections, at least 20 percent of the vote in all six regions of Somaliland. In addition, according to the constitution, parties cannot be based on religion, regionalism or kinship.

In reality, however political parties are dominated by clan interests, particularly during electoral periods, and leadership and candidate positions are shaped by, and reflect, clan politics. Peter Pham of the Atlantic Council notes, "Unlike the southern regions of Somalia, the territory [Somaliland] is dominated by a single clan and the political party system remains a thin veneer over traditional sub-clan politicking."¹⁵⁹ Of the 2002 elections, Mark Bradbury noted that: "The requirement to demonstrate support in all regions forced them [political parties] to construct cross-clan alliances."¹⁶⁰

In a 2010 report concerning the Somaliland peace process and political reconstruction, in reference to the transition from a clan system based on consensus to a winner-take-all political system, it was noted that:

Severe structural resistance from within Somaliland's traditional clan society demanded a highly flexible democratic system. Political parties, the National Electoral Commission, candidate nomination procedures, the election system itself, voter registration and other formal institutions all needed to accommodate a vast array of social and political forces. This left little room to transform government bodies into effective, stable, formal and professional institutions.¹⁶¹

The legal framework makes little correction for the political influence of clans. In a 2010 report by Interpeace and the Academy for Peace and Development, its authors note:

Apart from the few articles in the *Party Formation Law* (Law No. 14), and other constitutional promulgations ensuring political freedom and expression, regulatory laws determining political parties behavior in fundraising, clan outlook and lifespan as well as other determinations qualifying accountability, transparency and ethics are absent. On the contrary, rather than creating an enabling environment that ensures the democratic values of fair play and free expression, the political parties as well as the democratic processes have exacerbated clan-induced grievances and imbalances.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Pham, J. Peter. "The Somaliland Exception: Lessons on Postconflict State Building from the Part of the Former Somalia That Works." *Marine Corps University Journal* 3.1 (2012): 1-33. Print.

¹⁶⁰ Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 185.

¹⁶¹ Somaliland: 'home grown' peacemaking and political reconstruction by Mohammed Hassan Ibrahim and Ulf Terlinden; pg. 78. Accord Issue 21_24 [<http://www.c-r.org/accord/Somalia>]

¹⁶² *A Vote for Peace II: A Report on the 2010 Somaliland Presidential Election Process*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2012. Print, p. 74.

The failure of the legal framework to reduce clan influences was echoed in a 2012 report by Dr. Mohamed Fadal of the Social Research and Development Institute presented as part of the second annual conference on Somaliland development. The report highlights the growing prevalence, rather than reduction, of clan influence, at the expense of a national political agenda:

The political associations and parties are progressively moving away from national issues-based political agenda and now concentrate more on institutionalizing clan mobilizations with no national agendas needed. This would have negative influence in the stability, democratization, and state building processes in Somaliland. In the Constitution and other laws, exclusive clan parties are prohibited, however, there are no legal provisions which address their activities to mobilize exclusive clan conferences and meetings and the use of clan inciting rhetoric. A balance needs to be drawn between the national and clan level activities of political entities.¹⁶³

There seems to have been little progress between the 2002 elections and the 2012 elections. Contrast the above statement with a description of party platforms and clan influence during the 2002 elections, about which one author noted:

The absence of clear party platforms and messages meant that individual candidates were left to run their own campaigns...The parliamentary elections were more about establishing clan representation in government, for which parties were the vehicle. The substantive focus of the election campaign, therefore, was on the dynamics between the parties, clans and individual candidates.¹⁶⁴

It is of interest to note that during assessment interviews and workshops, the parties themselves recognized the need for improved platforms, though these were not discussed explicitly with reference to clan influence on platforms. The influence of clan on political parties was nevertheless a strong theme throughout the assessment (further discussed below). As one interviewee put it, “You do need to understand some of the clans’ dynamics because, otherwise, you might find yourself saying the wrong things...It’s the invisible camel in the room.”

Resources

Political parties are resourced primarily by personal donations, leadership donations, the diaspora and member contributions, though these resources do not appear to be regularized. Each political party receives 28 million shillings (approximately \$4,000) per month from the Somaliland government to run their offices and conduct regular activities. Members of parliament receive a monthly salary but no funds for constituency visits.

Alliances and Strategies

There are few examples of alliances between or concerted strategies by political parties, such as the recently signed agreement between Waddani and UCID, and political parties with other

¹⁶³ *Reflections and Lessons of Somaliland's Two Decades of Sustained Peace, Statebuilding and Democratization*. Publication. Vol. 2. Hargeisa: SORADI, 2012. Print, p. 51.

¹⁶⁴ Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 206.

actors, outside of the clan system. As noted elsewhere, political parties heavily depend on clans during elections for the provision of funding, candidates and voters. Interviewees from all sectors noted the limited formal engagement political parties have with other institutions, and particular challenges to working with the government (on the part of opposition parties). As further detailed below, political parties have weak relationships with their members of parliament, and vice versa, for a variety of political and structural reasons.

Further, there are strong connections between political parties and the diaspora. One political party leader noted, “We have very good relationship with the diaspora...our management consisted of three deputy chairman, a chairman and a candidate and they are all diaspora people.” A high ranking member of another party noted, “The diaspora are members of the party’s institutions, wherever they are in the world they have a sub office and sub committees where we work together.” Diaspora communities support political campaigns¹⁶⁵ and actively engage in Somaliland state building. A 2009 UNDP report¹⁶⁶ noted:

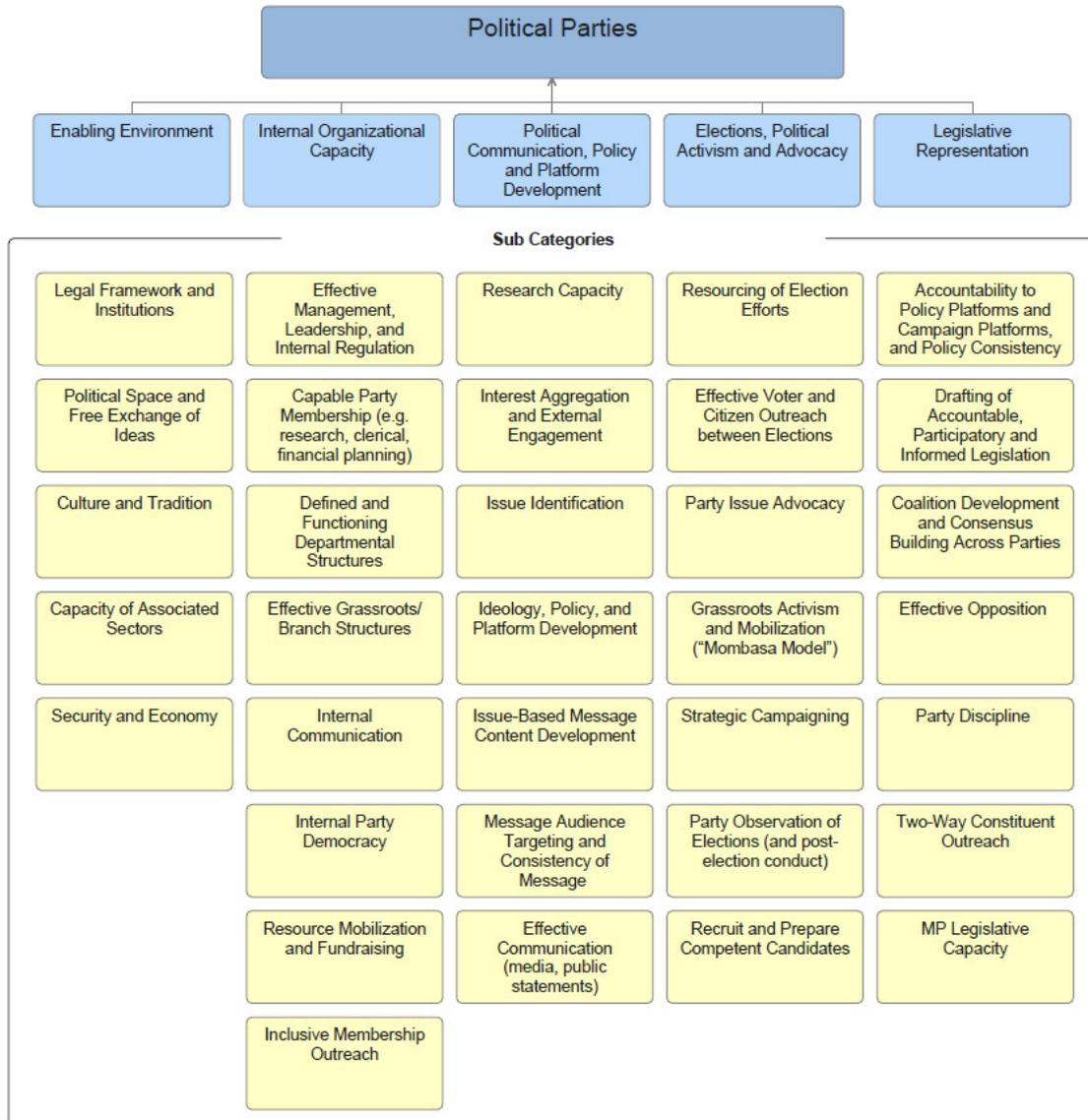
The Somaliland diaspora has always been an active element in the equation of state building and the restructuring of the political system of the country. A clear illustration of this is the number of Somalis from the Diaspora holding leadership positions in the political institutions of the country. Ten Ministers in a cabinet of 29 are returnees. Two of the three political parties in Somaliland are also led by returnees. The head of one of the two legislative chambers – the *Guurti* – is a diaspora returnee, along with 30 members of the 82-member House of Representatives.

Somaliland Strategy Analysis Framework: Political Parties

For the purposes of this democratization strategy assessment, analysis of political party interests, needs and priorities took place within a framework adapted for the Somaliland context. A graphical representation of the Somaliland political party framework is shown below:

¹⁶⁵ Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 177.

¹⁶⁶ Sheikh, Hassan, and Sally Healy. *Somalia's Mission Million: The Somali Diaspora and Its Role in Development*. Rep. N.p.: UNDP Somalia, 2009. Print.



This framework includes categories and sub-categories of party work, interests and influences, both real and potential in the case of Somaliland. The framework was developed by the assessment team based on IRI's 30 years of experience working with political parties around the world. Some of the subcategories were not addressed at all by Somalilanders in interviews or workshops due to lack of time, knowledge or perceived prioritization on the part of Somaliland participants, but are nonetheless helpful to identify next-steps, relative priorities and overlap with donor interests.

The top level boxes in light blue identify major categories of political party influences and internal and external roles and responsibilities. Some of these categories are the compilation of several major categories that were combined for the Somaliland context. For example, in other contexts, elections and political activism would be differentiated: they are distinct party efforts. For the Somaliland context they are combined because, while still relevant for Somaliland

political party development, participants struggled in the strategy workshops to differentiate between the different concepts in their actual work. For example, some participants only viewed activism in the context of elections. To preserve as much of the Somalilander participant points of view and to ensure that participants discussed their priorities with similar understandings of the categories of party work, these were combined.

The lower level boxes in yellow identify sub-categories of political party influences (such as culture and tradition) and roles and responsibilities related to each of the major categories. These are general headings and as such comprise a number of different party interests and activities.

Political party priorities discussed in the following section are organized by these categories and subcategories. Some subcategories are not discussed; those that are not discussed were not mentioned at all by workshop participants or to a significant degree by interviewees.

Political Party Priorities for Democratization

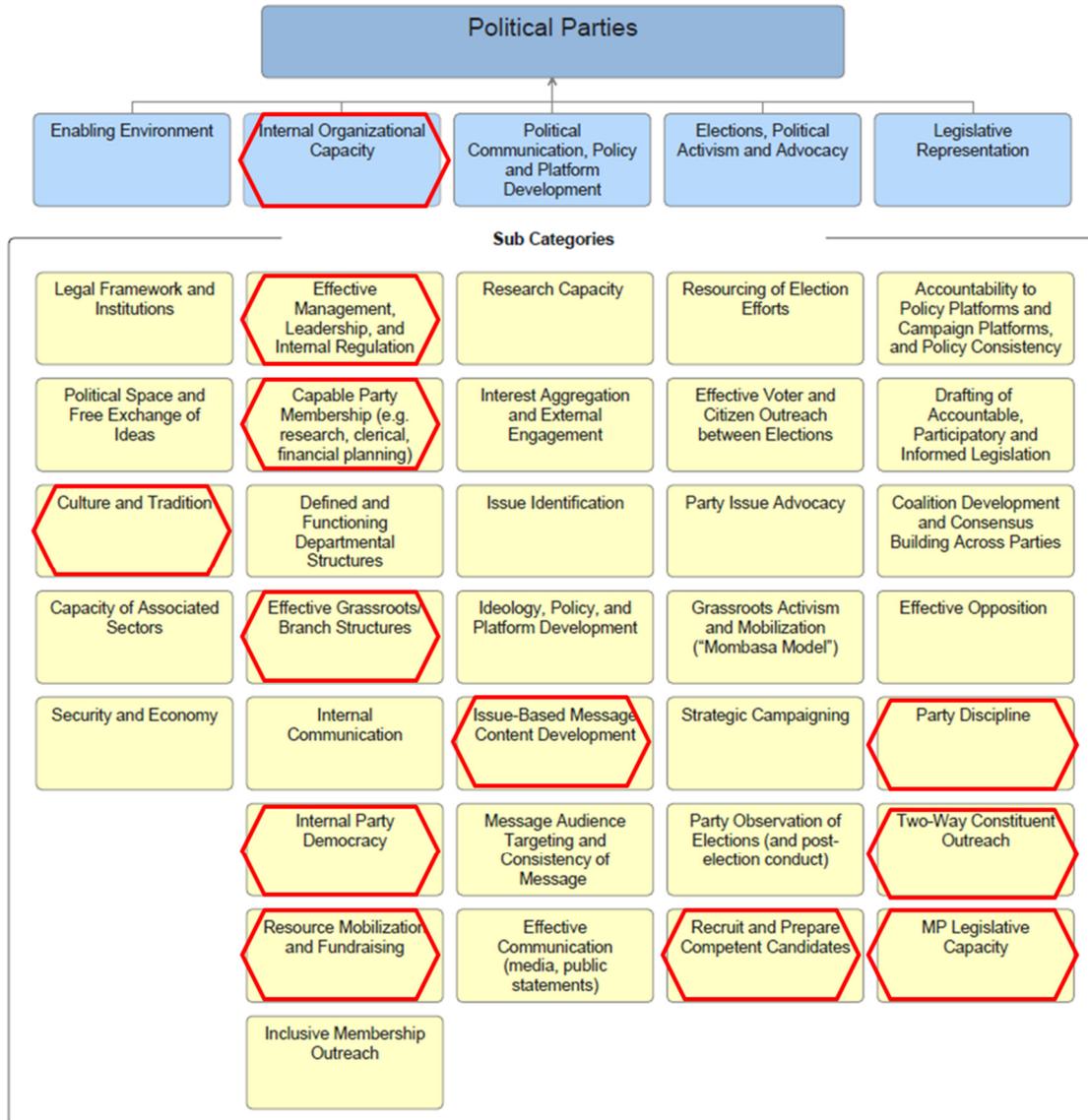
Political party priorities for democratization are based on individual interviews and one-day strategy workshops held individually with each of the three political parties: Kulmiye, Waddani and UCID. Leadership from each political party, including women and youth, participated in the interviews and workshops.

Political party representatives were relatively consistent in their views, priorities, and challenges, apart from expected differences, such as the fact that Waddani did not discuss at length its legislative representation given that it will compete in parliamentary elections for the first time in 2015.

Parties, as a whole, prioritized the categories of party development in the following way:

1. Internal organizational capacity
2. Political communication, policy and platform development
3. Enabling environment
4. Legislative representation
5. Elections, political activism and advocacy

Political party participants, through interviewees, strategy workshop outputs and discussions, prioritized different subcategories of party influences and roles and responsibilities. The prioritized subcategories are highlighted below with red boxes:



It is of interest to compare those subcategories that are prioritized with those subcategories that are not prioritized. Note that those that are not highlighted as high priorities may have been listed as medium priority or low priority, or may not have been mentioned at all by participants. The following section describes the high, medium and low priorities raised by political parties within each of these categories in further detail. Those that were not raised at all by political party participants are addressed under the Opportunities discussion.

Internal Organizational Capacity - High Priority

Internal organizational capacity was the only category that received unequivocal high priority marks from all political parties. Within internal organizational capacity, political parties raised challenges and priorities for change ranging from fundraising to internal party democracy, and offered potential interventions and solutions to be undertaken by the parties themselves and with international support.

A theme cutting across all internal organizational capacity sub-categories was a desire for international best practices, and in particular, gaining exposure to other political parties and their leaders who have struggled with similar circumstances and in similar environments.

Resource Mobilization and Fundraising

All three political parties emphasized the need for more resources to fund party organizational and outreach efforts, and the commensurate need to develop stronger party fundraising mechanisms. An underlying theme throughout the discussions was political party reliance on clans to mobilize funds for their candidates during elections, and participants emphasized the need (as mentioned elsewhere in this report) to reduce party reliance on clans. A high ranking party official noted the following:

[Resources] is one of the things which will be a problem on political parties. Whenever we propose to the donors to support us on resource they automatically assume that political parties want to get money from them, but we need specific resources, for example computers, printers, these are the essential things, which their daily task needs. They also need resources which they can travel, for example if the political party travels to Erigavo, or Zeila once, it is difficulty to travel back again for the whole year, because resources are not enough. Since it is needed the political parties to be strong and existed, they need to be helped on resource.

Party resources come from leader donations, the diaspora and party member subscriptions. As one participant noted, “Well, the financial resource that our party acquires is very limited. Mainly we get it from our subscriptions, and some contribution we get from our abroad branches, therefore we don’t have factories and businesses, we usually ask contribution from our supporters.” All parties mentioned a need to improve the way in which they collect member subscriptions.

Several participants raised the concern that diaspora support for parties would likely diminish in the coming years, as the diaspora becomes less connected over time to Somaliland. Participants emphasized the importance of raising money more sustainably from within Somaliland, as in-country supporters are more invested in the parties.

Within the overarching goal of increasing access to resources, parties prioritized the ability to develop and implement fundraising strategies, gaining experience from political parties from other countries that have undergone similar economic challenges and increasing the ability of parties to collect member dues.

Effective Grassroots Structures and Outreach

All three political parties rated as a high priority the need to increase the presence of parties at the grassroots level. For two parties this manifested as a need to decentralize the party to the regions so as to increase regional party efforts and their participation in party agendas, and for all parties it included the opening and financing of regional offices. Doing so, as some participants suggested, would also put the parties in a better position to determine the number of supporters they really have, and to aggregate voter interests.

Participants from one party noted that its bylaws prescribe elections for regional party chairs, but that internal elections have not been organized due to insufficient resources:

The regional chairs, we nominate them, but in the party regulations it says they need to be elected. They should have been elected. As our constitution says, the region will help them, through a conference elect a central committee for the region. And the central committee will elect a chairperson. The regional committee exists, but not elected. Similar in the district. The districts also need to do it but they did not...Maybe it is financial. To hold conference. The difficulty is holding regional general conference. It would cost several tens of thousands. Transportation, accommodation, etc. All the costs entailed with the conference. All from the regions, small towns, all these places. It costs. They believe the party should pay.

Internal Party Democracy

All parties indicated that efforts to advance internal party democracy were a priority. It appears that the internal regulations of most parties require internal democratic processes, such as congresses to select leaders and platforms, but that these are not always carried out – often for lack of funds – and there is little internal accountability to hold leaders to such requirements.

A high ranking official of one party noted in an interview:

The things that make it possible inside the political party to be institutionalized with its hierarchy, it is very important that there is democracy inside the political party. The second is that there is information sharing inside the political party, since the resource is so limited among the political parties, but they always base on their decision on consensus, it is also necessary that the political party should encourage public participation, and make it transparent and accountable, and it is good the political party management to be from top to bottom.

In discussions to brainstorm how to achieve their goals, participants cited the need for the parties to raise funds to carry out internal party events to select national, regional and district committees. Participants also raised the need to vote internally on party platforms; this is revisited in subsequent sections.

Effective Management, Leadership, and Internal Regulation

Leadership and effective management were highly prioritized by all political parties throughout the strategy workshops. Of highest priority was “to advance the leadership capacity and management capacity of party leaders,” which was highlighted in various forms by all three parties. One party emphasized the need to develop and implement strategic plans, and another highlighted the need to build trust between leadership and members through increased transparency and communication. With reference to the latter, the ensuing discussion focused on the need for accountable party financing.

Participant ideas for how their leaders can address these issues focused on having access to best practices from political parties from other countries that have undergone similar circumstances or faced similar resource constraints and political contexts. This was the one area that participants from all workshops noted could be supported by international organizations.

The need for strategic planning was a particular emphasis of participants from one party workshop, but participants – many of whom were themselves leaders from that political party – noted that their leadership was not open to participatory plan development, and that leaders themselves do not necessarily have the skills to design or carry out such a plan.

Interestingly, in a separate interview with a deputy chair of that same party, the interviewee picked up the theme of strategic planning:

The party needs a strategic plan based on situational analysis, addressing simple terms such as where are we now, where do we go from here, and how can we reach where we want to go. These are the three main questions that we need to answer, and it limits the resources that we need, the extent of knowledge we need...The most difficult factor in administration is change management.

Capable Party Membership

Membership capacity to advance and help shape party interests is limited by party member awareness of party ideology and internal structures, according to participants of all three party strategy workshops. Of high priority for these participants was for the party to train and socialize its own members on topics such as the party constitutions, the legal framework, party platforms and policies and their responsibilities as party members. Participants noted that significant hindrances to the parties' capacity to undertake such trainings are a lack of resources, and lack of trainers. One idea put forth and seconded by many of the participants was the development of university programs on these topics, and – resources and expertise permitting – the development of internal party cadre trainings divisions.

In an interview, one high ranking party official noted that: "The most important thing which has an impact on party's development is the training. The political parties are new and they need to get someone who has more experience than them. That is the main need which the political party needs."

Defined and Functioning Departmental Structures

All three political parties noted the need to complete and harmonize internal party regulations among party members, including standing procedures and job responsibilities, though these were prioritized as low. In discussions, participants noted that internal regulations should be reviewed and amended as necessary, but more importantly, that various party positions do not have clear duties outlined and that the parties suffer from poor division of labor.

Internal Communication

Internal communication was cited by two of the parties as in need of reform, in particular to increase the regularity and quantity of communication from party leadership to members. Aside from suggesting that the parties should open offices at all levels to make it easier for members to communicate within the party, participants had few suggestions on how to advance this, nor did they note the need for horizontal communication.

Inclusive Membership Outreach

Only one party really focused on the need for increased participation of and outreach to women and youth; participants in that party workshop were particularly outspoken on the topic, and represented women and youth leaders.

In a separate interview with a leader from that same party, he noted with regard to women:

...parties succeed one another based upon how active their women members are, because men cannot reach to the household level. So we plan to encourage women to be candidates and take part in the decision making process of the party...Yes, they are also better than men in terms of the financial, because they can collect the fund from door-to-door and they contribute themselves as well. They communicate one another and they give each other plenty of information.

This party, in its strategy workshop, prioritized party actions to empower women and youth through strengthened women and youth wings (though the party did not discuss how to do so) and appointing youth to national level positions. The party emphasized the challenge of having a limited number of women and youth with the experience or knowledge necessary to take on advanced positions.

Political Communication, Policy and Platform Development - Medium Priority

Of the medium priority categories, the development of policies, platforms, and political communication processes was the highest ranked category between all three political parties. However, within this category, there were few similarities between political parties as to which of the subcategories were of highest priority.

Ideology, Policy, and Platform Development

Within the category of political communication, policy and platform development, political party visions for change focused predominantly on elements of ideology and platform development; for this reason, “ideology, policy and platform development” was the highest ranked of these sub-categories (though it was not listed as a high priority item overall by all parties; two ranked it as high, one as medium).

As noted by one participant during a workshop, “None of the parties have a strong party ideology.” Both parties that ranked this subcategory as a high priority emphasized the need for party members to consult in the platform development process. The third party, which ranked this as a medium priority item, emphasized the need to review and renew party platforms through internal party congresses. Challenges to achieving this included lack of knowledge on the part of party members and leadership itself on how to develop a platform, lack of supporting strategies to inform platform development, and lack of finances to convene party gatherings.

Effective Communication

One party ranked as a high priority and two parties ranked as a medium priority the need to differentiate party platforms and ideology from those of other parties in the eyes of the public, through effective political communication. Participants of this workshop identified the media as an effective tool, but quickly added that they could not use domestic media to do so, as they claimed the domestic media is biased towards the government; instead the party, according to

these participants, needs to speak directly to citizens. Ideas for the party to increase its communication included: using independent websites based outside of Somaliland, talking directly to citizens, utilizing posters in the cities and other basic outreach tools such as t-shirts and slogans.

A high ranking official from one of the parties noted that it is important for citizens to have regular access to political parties in between elections, and vice versa, “[Communication with citizens] is the most important element because sometime people complain about us that we only reach them only at elections time, instead of reaching them any other time. So it’s important to reinforce the relationship with the community in periods where there are no elections.” Two political parties ranked as medium priority the development of regional offices to increase citizen access to and communication with the parties. However, the lack of resources was quick to be cited as a mitigating factor.

Research Capacity

One party ranked as high and another ranked as low the need for parties to have access to, or conduct, scientific research on citizen priorities to aid in platform development. Both parties cited the need for public opinion polling to know their level of popular support and to identify citizen priorities, and to train party members on research skills. Lack of resources and access to expertise was a disabling factor.

Enabling Environment – Medium Priority

Enabling environment received a high priority, medium priority and low priority from the three political parties, which places it overall as third ranked and as a medium priority category.

Culture and Tradition

Culture and tradition were the topics that engendered the largest debates under the enabling environment category, with clanism and clan influence among the most significant challenges. All parties prioritized highly the reduction of clan influence and clanism in Somaliland politics, while also noting the strength of clanism in Somaliland society is undergirded by the poor economic situation and that people depend on their clans for support.

Dependence on clans for support extends to the political parties as well. One party – while discussing the negative aspects of clanism – also discussed how it has been able to use clans to its advantage, for example to finance campaigns, appeal to and mobilize voters based on traditional allegiances, etc. Of the 2002 and 2005 campaigns, one author noted:

Their reliance on clans for finances and votes meant that most candidates stood for election in the regions where their clans are populous and campaign in the districts where they are a majority...The candidates and their clans were therefore the driving forces in the campaigns, rather than the parties from whom they received very little financial support. As a campaign required personal wealth or resources within the clan, this discriminated against aspiring candidates who were less well off or from ‘minority’ clans.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Bradbury, Mark. *Becoming Somaliland*. Oxford: James Currey, 2008. Print, p. 207.

Participants noted that elections were about negotiation among clans rather than competition among parties, under the guise of national party campaigns. One participant noted, "I think the major influence is from the clans which still has a role in our community; most of the elections are based upon the clans and tribes of the community."

A participant from another party workshop noted the influence clans have on internal party politics:

When there is conflict within the party, if they try to solve on their constitution it will not happen because the leaders are more powerful, and it will be solved through the traditional system. For example, we cannot fire anybody from the party, because tomorrow his elders will come to the party and say "you can't fire him." So he must accept being a member of the party.

When queried as to what parties can do to reduce clan influence in Somaliland politics, participants had few ideas, though participants from one party noted that it would take time and were able to identify an example of how the president has made efforts to do so: governors were moved to areas not of their clan. One participant explained it in the following way, "The solution will be when the population mature[s] politically, the clan will be eliminated and the leader cannot do whatever it wants...Now the president, he reshuffled all the governors. The governor of this region is not from this region. He is trying to reduce the clan."

Security and Economy

Economic issues were cross-cutting throughout all three political party workshops, though participants had no specific ideas for how to address the issues to achieve their other goals. In an interview, one high ranking party official succinctly put it: "Without economy, nothing is working." Low economic activity makes it difficult for the parties to raise money from members, particularly between elections; during elections parties rely on clan affiliations to raise funds for candidates.

Security was also an underlying theme, though never directly addressed in discussions about party priorities outside of the enabling environment. Participants disagreed on the level of security in Somaliland. Overall, most participants agreed that security is a critical factor that enables peaceful political development. One interviewee noted, "So peace and stability is more important than elections and democracy, and people are aware that, if there comes a conflict, it will turn into clan based conflicts, and that is the main reason why peace and stability is the most important element."

Legal Framework and Institutions

Priorities within the legal framework and legal institutions subcategory focused on correcting the voter registry, which was cited by all political parties via the workshops and interviews as in need of reform. As quoted by one participant: "As you are aware, there was a registration of the voters in the last presidential election, unfortunately it was unsuccessful in the management and recording, so if the registration is articulate and well executed, so that the person cannot take two identities from different locations, it will result a free and fair elections to take place."

Commensurate with the need for a corrected voter registry was the perception, on the part of two parties, that the government is interfering in independent institutions, in particular, the

composition of the National Election Commission. Fully realizing the independence of the National Electoral Commission was cited by both opposition parties as of high importance. One participant said: “[The National Electoral Commission] has no voice.”

Legislative Representation – Medium Priority

Kulmiye and UCID had the most concerns over their legislative representation in parliament. There is currently some confusion about UCID members of parliament who had allegiance to Waddani when it split from the UCID. Waddani has not yet participated in a parliamentary election, though it was established as the third national party in the 2012 local council elections. Until parliamentary elections are held in 2015, the members of parliament who belong to political parties that are no longer recognized or who have changed parties are in a legal vacuum.

Two-Way Constituent Outreach

A high priority for two parties was for their members of parliament to conduct constituent outreach. Participants expressed frustration that members of parliament do not visit their constituencies. One participant noted that members of parliament should not be “afraid” of their constituents. Both parties’ participants also noted that their members of parliament need to advocate for the interests of their regions and constituents, particularly when it comes to the government budget.

Suggestions to address this issue included the opening of party district offices and increasing the knowledge of voters about their rights with regards to their members of parliament.

Party Discipline

Party discipline was primarily a concern of a single party. The highest priority expressed by participants was the need for members of parliament to understand and be accountable to party regulations. Participants noted that in the next election there should be stronger vetting to select candidates that are loyal to the party, and to ensure that the candidates understand the party platform. A member from another party noted that one of its members of parliament had not only not understood the party platform, but actively supported a policy that was contrary to the party platform.

Participants also emphasized the need for members of parliament to be active members of the political parties, such as by participating in party meetings and paying membership dues. Lastly, participants prioritized the need to formalize the relationship between members of parliament and their parties. A clear challenge to this, as noted by participants, is the influence of clans on candidate selection.

Legislative Capacity of Members of Parliament

Two of the parties particularly mentioned that members of parliament need to understand their roles and responsibilities in parliament. Participants suggested that members of parliament receive training on their responsibilities as party members while in parliament and that parties strengthen candidate selection processes. As noted above, a challenge to improving member of parliament selection processes is the dependence on clans.

Elections, Political Activism and Advocacy – Low Priority

This category was marked as a low priority by two parties, and a medium priority by the third party; the low prioritization is likely due to the fact that the next (2015) elections are perceived as being far away. All parties focused on the need to recruit and prepare competent candidates. Within this sub-category, two parties emphasized that candidates need to understand and represent party platforms and ideology, suggesting that trainings on the topics be required as a condition for selection as candidate. The challenge to this, as mentioned elsewhere, is the influence of the clans in the selection of candidates. Several participants also noted that many voters prefer male candidates over female candidates.

Participants of one party also prioritized the creation of transparent candidacy criteria and a transparent selection process. Participants suggested that parties should strengthen internal party democracy mechanisms to select candidates.

Priority Opportunities for International Support

The priorities for political party development discussed in the previous section focused on priorities that political parties enunciated based on their experience and knowledge. This section focuses on how international funders can support political party priorities as well as additional matters that the assessment team recommends as priorities, based on data from workshops, stakeholder interviews, literature review and observation.

Many of these opportunities overlap and are mutually reinforcing. Indeed, these opportunities will reap the most benefit if undertaken with the understanding that party development cannot be implemented one element at a time: platform development is linked to leadership capacity, which is linked to member capacity and resource mobilization, itself linked to economic development, and so on. While Somalilanders have themselves been able to identify top priority elements, many of these depend on equal advancement among other categories, as well as advancement in other sectors, such as civil society and executive and local governance.

Opportunity 1: Support programs that provide technical assistance to parties in creating clear and distinct national party identities and issue-based platforms.

Without a party identity, parties cannot seriously compete on issues or campaign outside of potentially divisive identity politics. Without competing on issues, parties cannot be held accountable to the electorate for their members' efforts while in office, members cannot woo voters on the party's objective merit as opposed to clan affiliation, and there is little incentive for truly democratic governance for and by the people.

Developing a national party identity is challenging in an environment where clan interests dominate the political scene. In the report on the second annual conference held in 2011, the Social Research and Development Institute noted:¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ *Reflections and Lessons of Somaliland's Two Decades of Sustained Peace, Statebuilding and Democratization*. Publication. Vol. 2. Hargeisa: SORADI, 2012. Print, pg. 1.

While some key issues are being addressed, a more daunting task is overcoming the perpetual lack of commitment to democratic accountability and rule of law of key state institutions. For instance, the national elected institutions are being invariably challenged by clan allegiances which sometimes shake the foundations of the fragile constitutional system. When the highest democratic institutions such as the Parliament or the Executive are swayed by clan influences, then in the eyes of public the state is discredited.

And, in its 2012 elections report, Saferworld recommended that, “Political parties should be encouraged to lift the standard of politics in Somaliland by focusing on issues and policies rather than clan issues.”¹⁶⁹

Overcoming clan dominance in politics to advance a more national agenda entails evolving from a firmly entrenched and long standing political culture and Somaliland’s sub clan socio-economic system. One interviewee noted, “The question is how to interject issues, cross-clan issues.” Developing identities, ideologies, and platforms that cut across clan lines is critical to Somaliland’s ability to strengthen its multiparty system and realize its goal of transitioning from a clan-based political system to a more national and democratic one.

On the one hand, identifying cross-class issues is fairly clear-cut (especially if survey research is available, opportunity three below). As one interviewee noted, “We all need clean water!” Identifying top issues and developing platforms based on those issues is, at a theoretical level, relatively straightforward. However, as noted elsewhere, campaign periods when platforms tend to be finalized also tend to be periods of sub-clan politicking and negotiation, rather than political party competition, thereby reducing the incentive to focus on platforms and individual party identities.

As clans are most involved in political party affairs during elections (by fundraising and providing funded candidates), an important step for political parties is to build a party identity in the period between elections (as noted under opportunity five below). In the period between elections, parties can take on projects that advance party ideological or issue interests and cooperate with civil society organizations to leverage their efforts outside of formal representative institutions (which are often themselves dominated by clan interests). Doing so will build the party’s reputation for championing certain issues, which they can carry into the electoral period.

Programs that support the creation of distinct national party identities and issue-based platforms depend on political as well as technical assistance. It is important to work with political parties on strategies to identify core constituencies and priority issues, as well as technical expertise to develop appropriate policy proposals and responses. International funders can help with both.

¹⁶⁹ Makokha, Jacinta, and Yussuf Ali. *Somalilanders Speak: Lessons from the November 2012 Local Elections*. Rep. Saferworld, Apr. 2013. Web. July 2013, p. 18.

Opportunity 2: Provide individualized assistance and best practices examples of political parties that have overcome similar challenges and contexts.

Somaliland political parties are cognizant of the challenges they face to party development in terms of influences from political culture, the state of security and the economy and legacies of war, among others. Of high priority for political party participants was the sharing of best practices from political parties from other countries that have successfully consolidated party structures and undertaken political party outreach and representative activities in situations similar to those found in Somaliland. Of particular interest were recent experiences from parties that had overcome: highly limited resources (including limitations to transportation to visit constituents); low member knowledge of party functions and the role of party members; and influence and competition from longstanding centers of political and economic power.

The provision of international best practices should be accompanied by more individualized guidance to political parties and their leaders on topics such as national and grassroots level party organization, strategy and platform development, membership recruitment, external communications, revenue generation and financial management, etc. Organizational change requires top-level buy-in and determination. Generalized trainings aimed at party cadres will not target that audience, but are important for other goals (see opportunity two). A political consultant model, where political party leaders receive individualized assistance, would benefit from strong credibility; competitive organizations will be more cautious taking advice from someone who is giving advice equally to the competitor. Political consultants provide individualized assistance, and are often able to benefit from greater disclosure from the client.

Individualized assistance, such as the political consultant model, should be from party leaders who have experienced challenges similar to those in Somaliland. International donors are well placed to identify and support such individuals, whether as advisors, mentors or trainers. Selecting and providing such individuals should be undertaken with care and participation from the Somaliland political parties themselves, perhaps using a self-selection method; in this way, parties will be able to select the individual with the experience most in line with their priorities, and will likely feel more committed to the process and thus to work with the individual.

Opportunity 3: Directly train or support the training of party cadres, including the development of sustainable party training divisions, to increase the capacity of local level members to advance party efforts.

All parties noted a need to increase the capacity of party cadres. The limited access to cadre training was picked up in a 2011 report, “Pillars of Peace, Democracy in Somaliland, Challenges and Opportunities” by the Academy for Peace and Development and Interpeace, in which the authors wrote:

The lack of training of the political parties’ functionaries or to an extent their formal structures which tend to focus on the mobilization, membership, campaigning, fund raising, mobility, accountability, public outreach, use of media, etc. is a serious impediment to the growth of sustainable political parties

serving a genuine electoral vehicle to access a representative seat in the Somali context.¹⁷⁰

Party cadre training is not only important to increase the capacity of party members to campaign and fundraise, which are traditional cadre activities, but also to ensure that members understand and can communicate the party platform, and that they understand the role of political parties in Somaliland's democratic system and how they differ from the clan system. Political party members often are influential members of communities, and they can serve as important reminders that democracy does not only take place during elections. They also serve as important reminders of who the parties are and what they represent between elections when parties do not spend on campaign paid media.

Somaliland's *National Development Plan*, drafted in 2011 by the Ministry of National Planning and Development, noted that Somaliland parties have "weak political party discipline and membership cohesion."¹⁷¹ This comes as no surprise given that party mobilization tends to take place only during electoral periods. Training party cadres in between elections is a good opportunity to prepare them for elections, increase their loyalty, build their civic awareness, increase access to and sources of information and increase internal communication, particularly horizontal communication, which in turns builds trust and relationships, potentially across clan lines.

Party cadre training is a relatively low cost effort, and could be made sustainable by the development of internal expertise, to eventually serve as leaders in internal party training divisions. The recommendation for internal party training wings was also raised after the 2012 elections in an April 2013 report by Saferworld, in which it noted the following recommendation, "Political parties (and civil society organizations and the National Electoral Commission) should work on developing their own internal capacity-building programs."¹⁷²

With reference to cadre training, a high-ranking official of one of the political parties suggested the following:

There are good opportunities in Somaliland; they could take the political parties into the universities for cadre training, for example if the political parties need lawyers, there are law faculties in the universities, there is political science and international relations faculties in the universities, there is administration faculties in the universities, these are the basic things which the political parties need to develop.

There are few examples of political parties preferring to depend on universities to provide basic cadre training, which suggests that party leaders are mostly concerned with basic member capacity and, secondarily, with capacities specific to party cadres.

¹⁷⁰ *A Vote for Peace II: A Report on the 2010 Somaliland Presidential Election Process*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2012. Print, p. 13.

¹⁷¹ Republic of Somaliland. Ministry of National Planning and Development. *National Development Plan (2012-2016)*. Hargeisa: n.p., 2011. Print, p. 230.

¹⁷² Makokha, Jacinta, and Yussuf Ali. *Somalilanders Speak: Lessons from the November 2012 Local Elections*. Rep. Saferworld, Apr. 2013. Web. July 2013, p. 18.

Opportunity 4: Fund national survey research to increase access to independent national statistics and information on public priorities.

Somalilanders in general have limited access to information; this limitation is compounded when it comes to information that parties can use to determine priority issues and for advocacy work and campaign strategy development, including issue identification. Interestingly, political party participants of strategy workshops and interviews did not note any reference to or priority interest in the subcategories of “issue identification” and “issue-based message content development.” This is due partly to the fact that political parties do not yet base their platforms on issues (further developed under opportunity seven), and partly due to a common characteristic of political elites worldwide: a perception that they already know what is best and what is necessary for their constituents and country. This belief is a combination of elite sensibility and lack of information with which to make such judgments. One international organization interviewee noted it in this way:

One of the challenges, though, is good data. You know as well as I know that you put 10 elites around the table and they're going to all agree and say “we’re the clan elders, we’re the opinion leaders, and so we know what our people want,” so their decision-making is done very much anecdotally because there's no good data...So I think the decisions are being made the best they can, but they're also being made in the absence of good data to inform what it is the donors should be doing.

Another noted the following:

Our experience shows that oftentimes the elites are quite deprived; that their view of the world is different than an average person’s view of the world. Again, to correct that, there needs to be some investment in good data collection.

Survey research, such as public opinion polling, underpins much of political party work; political parties are, after all, issue aggregators and representatives of the people. Access to survey research is critical for their ability to understand their constituents and constituent needs, formulate policy responses, develop and target appropriate message, and design campaign strategies.

While the fact that political parties in Somaliland operate without reference to data is symptomatic of larger challenges related to the lack of information in the country (media professionalism, internet penetration, educational access, etc.), public opinion polling is a discreet project that lends itself well to international, non-partisan donor support. Somalilanders may have more confidence in polling results if managed by international organizations and funders.

Opportunity 5: Support the organization of political party congresses in advance of forthcoming elections.

The *Pillars of Peace* report noted the following with regard to Somaliland’s political party congresses:

The emergence of the political parties in Somaliland was a significant step to bridge the clan (Beel) political transition. The 2005 House of Representatives successful elections opened the way for representative democracy based ‘one man - one vote’ system in Somaliland. However, the absence of a functioning internal democratic mechanism to allow free competition for party leadership was exposed during the parties’ congresses. Party Congresses are testing times for political parties and their leaders largely because it is the only time party leaders expose themselves to internal challengers. However, knowing the risk involved, no party leader was willing to hold a Congress unless its outcome ensured their leadership. To that end, a great deal of time was spent on selecting and screening party delegates. Challengers to the leadership were occasionally purged. Once this process had taken place, the Party Congress was convened, and the outcome was predetermined.¹⁷³

Political party congresses are not only times to make major decisions, determine leadership and platforms for the coming years, but are important times for the party to discuss emerging issues, gather updates from the regions, reinforce leadership and platform legitimacy and build credibility in the eyes of its members and the public. A party congress that purely fills a ceremonial role will not leverage these benefits, and will be a missed opportunity – and wasted resource – to advance party development.

A priority for political parties in the coming year, especially as they prepare for the 2015 parliamentary elections, will be to organize and hold effective party congresses that fulfill the objectives listed above. All political parties noted resource constraints with regard to holding internal conventions, particularly in regard to venue and the transportation of participants. To avoid perceptions of partisan support, international funders could support in-kind assistance or a matching fund program to support political party congresses.

Opportunity 6: Support programs that aim to increase the presence of parties in between elections, including promoting collaboration between political and development institutions.

Political parties worldwide make the regular mistake of disappearing in the eyes of the public in the period between elections. The period between elections is the time that the party strengthens its internal and grassroots structures, and builds a party identity and relationship with constituents distinct from campaigns. Building of political party structures is particularly important for when election periods resume; parties depend on strong and prepared structures to implement campaign strategies during chaotic campaign periods. Moreover, the success of a party during an election has much to do with the party’s record in office, as a member of the opposition, and as an advocate for constituent interests more broadly at the national and local levels, all of which take place between elections. An element of a party’s work between elections is supporting the work of its members of parliament (discussed in further detail in opportunity 10). In addition, political parties serve constituent interests beyond formal representative bodies; for example, local political party offices often advance community

¹⁷³ *A Vote for Peace: How Somaliland Successfully Hosted Its First Parliamentary Elections in 35 Years*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2006. Print, p. 13.

interests by partnering with civil society organizations in local campaigns and projects that advance that party's platform and political interests.

Somaliland political parties have very weak party presence in between elections. An observer of political parties in Somaliland noted during an interview, “[It’s important] to train parties and try to reinforce or make sure party structures exist outside of Hargeisa, because they get set up for elections and then they disappear, and everything’s in Hargeisa...I mean, the Somalilanders understand how to use a party to get elected but they don’t really know what to do with the party between the election cycle and why it’s important and why it’s valuable.”

Political parties are aware that they need to strengthen their connection with the grassroots outside of Hargeisa (further detailed in opportunity eight). However, parties are less aware of the kinds of issue advocacy activities and cooperation with civil society organizations that they can do to advance their interests outside of formal representative institutions and in between elections. If parties can work on such productive projects, they will build local awareness of, and an identity for, the party outside of campaign periods, periods which are often marred by perceptions of “high politics” and clan politicking.

Moreover, in a truly active, multi-party democracy, political parties and civil society organizations play intertwined roles. Effective engagement between political parties and civil society can foster improved citizen participation, government transparency and internal party democracy, at national and local levels. Civil society serves as aggregators of and outlets for citizens to make their priorities and interests known, while political parties should represent the diverse interests of their members, and translate member priorities into policy proposals and legislative initiatives. Efforts to support political party work with civil society organizations in between elections will yield economies of scale in terms of results: greater understanding and improved quality and relevance of projects.

International support for such efforts should recognize the overlap and mutual dependence between development and politics, and support projects that provide a combination of political and development assistance. As one international observer noted with regard to the overlap between politics and development:

Groups that can do development don’t want to be involved in politics, but people in politics need access to those technical [development] experts. Donor funding cannot be siloed. One pot for democracy, one pot for health, etc. [Funding] needs integration on issue sectors, to develop real issue based parties and platforms.

Support for parties between elections can come in the form of projects that bring local party offices and local civil society together on joint projects; work with political parties to identify and advance local interests with local governing structures; consolidate internal structures; and build cadre capacity.

Opportunity 7: Increase the capacity of political parties to conduct and utilize low-cost public opinion research.

Commensurate with the need for access to information from national survey research, political parties need access to more regular and affordable ways to collect information that can be used to identify and advance platforms and strategies. Political parties must serve not only as advocates for issues of known importance to their members, but they must also serve as sources of reliable and current information regarding their constituents, communities, regions, and issue topics in order to inform their advocacy and legislative efforts. In order to gather the appropriate information, analyze it and respond in an educated and timely manner, there is a strong need for the parties to have increased capacity and knowledge of research methods, such as focus grouping, interviewing, and basic polling. This is particularly critical given the limited access to information via traditional media outlets, and limited communication channels due to low information and communications technology penetration and high costs.

Opportunity 8: Support efforts to increase party presence and communication outside of Hargeisa.

Political parties need a presence outside of Hargeisa to create national identities, understand preferences and issues that prevail outside Hargeisa and provide an alternative political outlet in between elections. A common theme throughout the assessment mission was the need for organizations to have a better presence, and access to voices, outside of Hargeisa.

One international observer put it in the following way:

...if you have a strong party system that is present all over the country, then hopefully those [local] messages and priorities can get filtered up to the national level. Because as the way it is now, decisions are simply made by an elite, without really thinking or understanding what the priorities need to be based on what people want...part of that's cultural, the sort of the privileging of elder opinion over the community. But I think that parties are the best avenue you can have to have local opinion represented at a national level.

Another international observer noted that it is not merely an issue of elites versus non-elite, but Hargeisa versus outside Hargeisa, even in the case of civil society:

We often think that civil society is from grassroots and of the people, but elites are elites...I don't mean that in a negative way. It's just a description. But I think it's wrong to view civil society, particularly Hargeisa-based civil society, as speaking for the people...

Political parties noted the challenges they have traveling to the regions, communicating with members based in the regions, building local party branch organizations, and encouraging members of parliament to visit with constituencies. Significant obstacles include infrastructure and resources; traveling outside Hargeisa is expensive and time consuming. However, building a presence outside of Hargeisa is critical if parties are to strengthen their organizational structures, learn about the issues and priorities facing their members to better develop platforms

and messages, and build relationships and support in between elections that transcend clan interests.

Opportunity 9: Support programs to advance women and youth cadres.

Women and youth are an often under-utilized resource in developing democracies. Somaliland political parties, while noting the importance of women and youth, did not advance any concrete agenda to capitalize on their women and youth members besides encouraging their placement in leadership positions. In its April 2013 report on the local council elections, Saferworld provided the following recommendation: “Gender sensitization and training should be held for all political parties, parliamentarians, clan elders, and *Guurti* members. Political parties and associations should be encouraged to recruit women candidates and build their own internal democracy.”¹⁷⁴

Advancing women and youth cadres requires targeted capacity building in terms of overall member capacity – women and youth tend to receive less party investment in their knowledge and skills – as well as specialized skill-sets to outreach to other women and youth.

Specialized “wings” are utilized by many parties around the world to contribute to targeted member advancement, but can be detrimental if they are used to further marginalize women or youth away from central decision making processes. Wings, properly conceived, are a mechanism to enable women and youth to become active and increase their confidence in a more conducive setting, teach and be taught political skills, and develop networks. Importantly, wings should take on many party activities related to their constituencies, such as creating and implementing targeted outreach strategies to women and youth constituents, organizing grassroots activities, preparing women and youth candidates, and informing larger party platforms and strategies. International funders are well positioned to provide examples and experts from other countries on this topic.

Opportunity 10: Support programs that work to improve political party representation in parliament (ties with members of parliament, party discipline, etc.) and local councils.

Improving party representation in parliament and local councils relies equally on the success of two other efforts: improving the quality of candidates and improving the relationship between members of parliament/councilors and their parties.

The challenge of qualified candidates was raised at a 2011 conference organized by the Social Research and Development Institute. The conference report recommended “urg[ing] political parties to bring quality candidates to compete.”¹⁷⁵ However, the authority that political parties have to select candidates, let alone qualified candidates, is questionable, given the extent to which political parties rely on the clan system to fund campaigns and therefore fund candidates. Existing power structures will always exert pressure over political parties in the selection of

¹⁷⁴ Makokha, Jacinta, and Yussuf Ali. *Somalilanders Speak: Lessons from the November 2012 Local Elections*. Rep. Saferworld, Apr. 2013. Web. July 2013, p. 18.

¹⁷⁵ *Reflections and Lessons of Somaliland's Two Decades of Sustained Peace, Statebuilding and Democratization*. Publication. Vol. 2. Hargeisa: SORADI, 2012. Print, pg. 3.

candidates and compete for their loyalty when in office, thus a more appropriate recommendation is to support political party efforts to self-finance or resource their own election efforts to a greater extent.

In the absence of party independence over their finances today, political parties can undertake greater efforts to train candidates once they have been selected. Party members in strategy sessions noted that often candidates do not want to be trained, or that party members have no authority to insist upon it; this is a matter for party leadership. Support from international funders in the form of international best practices may serve as an incentive.

The second effort, improving the relationship between members of parliament and their parties, depends partly on how the member came to be elected, how long they have been in power, party activities between elections, party discipline and the member's attitude toward being associated with a party. One international stakeholder relayed the following story:

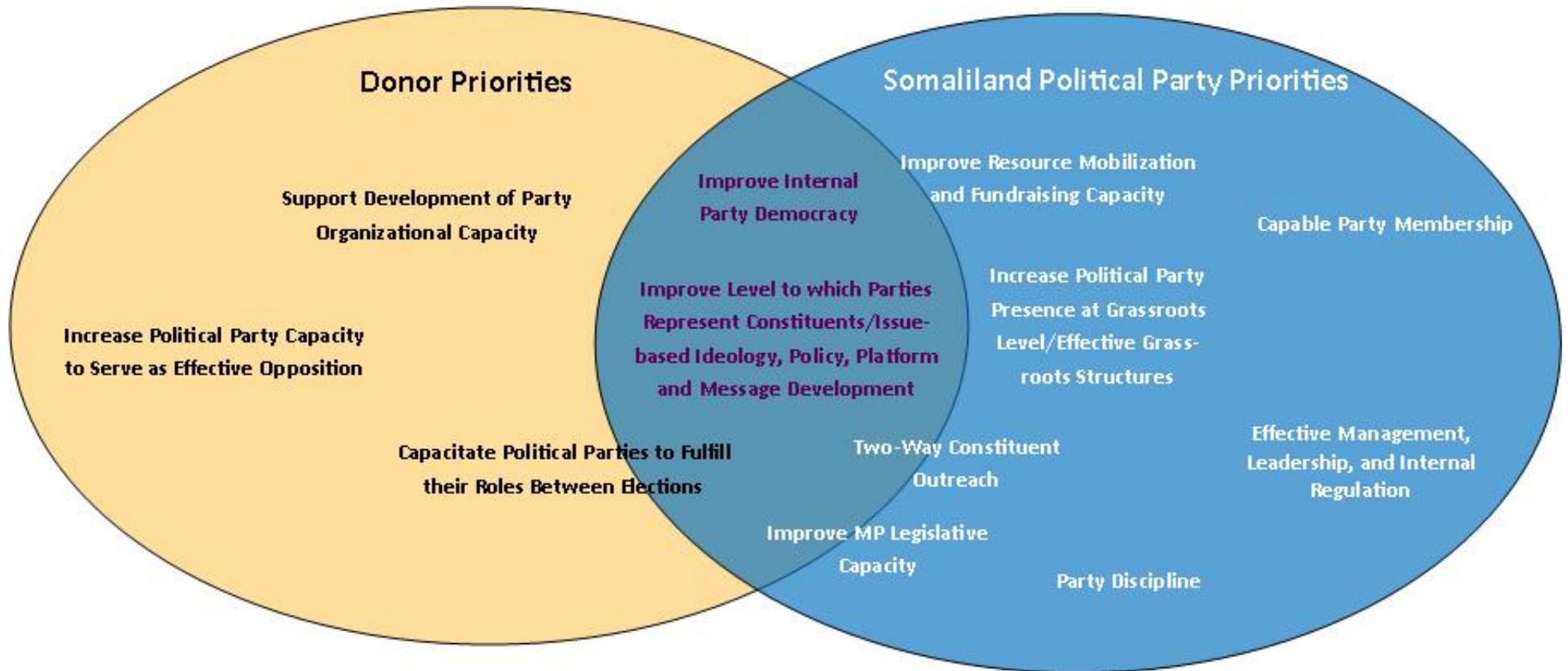
We had tried at one point when we were doing these vote-counting forums that we designed for the secretary general's office to use, ... he took the initiative to start including the [names and identify their party] in the official minutes... and there was a huge uproar because parties, members of parliament didn't want to be associated with those parties.

Another international stakeholder recalled the experience of her predecessor:

I think [predecessor] held a sort of meeting, and I forget which party it was, but there were some members of parliament and then some party leaders, and so [predecessor] had started the meeting, and one of them said, "Well, do you think we could go around the room and introduce ourselves because I don't know everyone here?" I mean, that's absurd. It's party leadership and you're national representatives, and they didn't know who one another were.

With parliamentary elections slated to take place in 2015, there is great opportunity to work with political parties to prepare their candidates and, after the election, to support programs that encourage collaboration between members of parliament and their parties. Parties especially have an important role to play in supporting their members of parliament in the period between elections.

Opportunity Map



MEDIA

Overview

Somaliland's media sector presents a complex and contradictory picture. International observers often see the sector as lively and vibrant, in great part due to the wide number of print and web outlets, many of them in English and run by the diaspora. Local media stakeholders take pride in the sector's relative strength, particularly when compared to other areas: South Central Somalia is one of the world's most dangerous places to be a journalist, with at least 18 reporters killed over 2012.¹⁷⁶ Deeper examination of the media sector – particularly when looking past a more narrow focus on output – reveals a more problematic landscape, and one that faces threats to its basic freedom to operate.

Most local media stakeholders participating in the media workshop and interviewed identified the lack of journalism education/training and poor professionalism as leading concerns, with some reluctant to raise or discuss larger issues. This reluctance may stem in part from an expectation of journalists to be “patriotic,” as expressed by some government-affiliated media, or out of fatigue from failing to achieve other goals, such as the licensing of private radio, as quietly expressed by one independent voice. It was suspected by interviewees that government fear of the power of media and its destabilizing potential in part drives its efforts to control the airwaves and its occasional tendency to harass journalists and close outlets. Low literacy levels,¹⁷⁷ insufficient broadcasting infrastructure, inadequate print distribution and an over-emphasis on political reporting further leave the Somaliland public with limited access to objective information on the broad variety of topics they need in order to make sound decisions in their daily lives.

Despite its plethora of challenges, the media sector in Somaliland appears to have received among the least amount of donor attention compared with other sectors in the field of democracy and governance, though many donors now seem to agree with the importance of raising media issues higher on the agenda. In contrast to civil society – which has received significant donor resources but has not been the subject of analytical studies – there is growing literature on the media sector (though often as part of research on Somalia as a whole).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ "Timeline: Somali Journalists Killed in 2012." *Sabahi*. N.p., 12 Oct. 2012. Web. <http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/10/12/feature-01>.

¹⁷⁷ There are no accurate figures on literacy. According to a 2010 report on the *Millennium Challenge Goals in Somalia*, in 1999 the literacy rate of the population aged 15 years and above was 26.9 percent in 1999, with female literacy half of male literacy. Media and other sources suggest the overall figure may have risen to over 40 percent since then: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/92769/somalia-healthcare-education-gains-as-somaliland-marks-20th-anniversary>.

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, BBC, “Analysis of the Somali Media Environment,” <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhhttp/mediaaction/pdf/AnAnalysisOfTheSomaliMediaEnvironment.pdf>; Infoasaid, “Somalia Media and Telecoms Landscape Guide,” http://infoasaid.org/sites/infoasaid.org/files/somalia_guide_-_final_version_updated_090312_20.12.12.pdf; IREX, “Media Sustainability Index,” <http://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/u128/Somaliland.pdf>. Many Somaliland media themselves also cover media issues regularly.

Legal Context and Background

The legal framework for media remains murky, and understanding of it appears low. The current landscape is guided by a constitutional protection of freedom of speech under Article 32, as well as a 2004 law that members of the Somaliland media community and other observers have deemed insufficient and problematic, including its broad nature that covers all forms of media, its failure to provide for an independent regulatory body and its inclusion of defamation as a criminal act.¹⁷⁹ Efforts towards reform include a 2007 draft press and publications bill that also fell short of international standards. In 2011, various stakeholders¹⁸⁰ reportedly joined to draft two new laws, a law on media and access to information and a broadcasting law, but at last note both remain with the parliament's Committee on Social Affairs and Religion. Broadcasting continues to be tightly controlled by the government; despite indications during the elections that the new ruling party would begin granting radio licenses (a clear priority set in the *National Development Plan*),¹⁸¹ none have been allocated. While journalists are ostensibly free to write what they wish, forms of censorship and other pressures do take place, apparently in response to poor professionalism, through closures, harassment and arrests.¹⁸² Up to 60 journalists were held in 2012.¹⁸³ Libel falls under the penal code, and criminal, rather than civil, law is used to detain, though not necessarily charge or sentence, journalists.

Actors

The media sphere is characterized by a marked imbalance between a limited number of broadcasting outlets and a proliferation of print and web outlets. According to IRI research conducted in 2012, television serves as the main source for news and information about political leaders (44 percent), followed closely by radio (42 percent). Newspapers only account for three percent of the main source of political information, even less than word of mouth at five percent, and online sources serve a paltry one percent. Some of these figures shift according to geography. For example, 55 percent of urban respondents rely on television for news on politics, compared to 28 percent of rural respondents, while only 32 percent of urban respondents rely on radio, compared to 56 percent of rural respondents.¹⁸⁴

There is only one public (government) radio station, Radio Hargeisa, and no private stations. Radio Hargeisa's programming is limited to six hours a day, two in the morning, and four in the

¹⁷⁹ http://www.somalilandlaw.com/press_media_law.htm;

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/AMDI/somalia/amdi_somalia3_media.pdf.

¹⁸⁰ Including Somaliland parliamentarians, journalists associations and government officials in a process supported by the international NGO, Free Press Unlimited.

¹⁸¹ The *National Development Plan* includes the government's intention to "develop and implement a policy, legal, and regulatory framework." Some local media report that they have not seen or had input into the draft.

¹⁸² In 2010, satellite channel Universal TV was banned following accusations of false information and instigation of conflict. In January 2012, Horn Cable TV was temporarily shut down, including the arrest of 22 of its staff.

¹⁸³ Rhodes, Tom. "Mission Journal: Somaliland's Press Harassed, Disappointed." Web log post. *CPJ Blog: Press Freedom News and Views*. Committee to Protect Journalists, 13 June 2012. Web. <<http://www.cpj.org/blog/2012/06/mission-journal-somalilands-press-harassed-disappo.php>>.

¹⁸⁴ *Survey of Somaliland Public Opinion*. Rep. International Republican Institute, 11 Oct. 2012. Web.

<<http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2012%20October%2011%20Survey%20of%20Somaliland%2C%20June%2016-24%2C%202012.pdf>>.

afternoon. Until 2012, its signal was restricted to the Hargeisa area; it has recently been extended throughout most of the territory. The BBC provides Somali-focused programming available around Hargeisa 24 hours a day, in Somali, English and Arabic. Voice of America also broadcasts for much of the day, in Somali and English, with a slightly wider reach than the BBC. Transmitters for both the BBC and Voice of America are based at the Ministry of Information. A handful of outlets claim web-based broadcasting, but without any significant content or reach.

In addition to radio, there is one government-owned television station, Somaliland National TV, and three private stations: Horn Cable TV, Somaliland Space Channel and Bulsho TV. The national TV station can be viewed via antenna from 6:30am – 1:00am, and via satellite 24 hours a day. It is also available online. Horn Cable can be viewed via satellite and online 24 hours a day, though much of the programming is broadcast on a loop. Space Channel can only be viewed in Haregisa, Berbera, Wajale and Gabiley. Bulsho, which broadcasts from 5:00pm – 1:00am, is also only terrestrial, and limited to certain areas.

In contrast to broadcast media, there are over one dozen newspapers, including a government-owned daily published by the Ministry of Information (estimated circulation of 400 per day). Private newspapers include *Haatuf*, *Ogaal*, *Jamhuriya*, *Waaheen* and *Somaliland Times*; there are no reliable figures for circulation, but reportedly none print over 1,000 copies. As one copy may be read by several readers, actual readership is likely much higher. There are more than two dozen websites that provide news related to Somaliland, and are most likely read by urban-based elites, Internet-savvy youth and the diaspora.¹⁸⁵ There is only one, state-owned news agency, SOLNA.

The numerous journalist associations include the most prominent, the Somaliland Journalists Association, as well as others such as the Somaliland Women Journalists' Association and the Union of Somali Journalists. There are no associations representing owners.

A handful of universities claim to offer media-related courses, but none offer a solid degree program in journalism or media management.

Audience remains an important actor in the media sphere. According to the 2012 IRI research, 60 percent of the public follows news on topics such as government, politics, and current events, with 45 percent doing so on a daily basis. Many stakeholders credit the public for helping to carve out existing levels of freedom of speech, as Somalilanders are considered to be active and engaged media consumers, and thus key allies. Though outlets do not have any formalized mechanisms for either responding to audience needs or collecting audience input, stakeholders do acknowledge the importance of knowing what audiences want and do seem to value the ad hoc feedback they receive.

¹⁸⁵ Issa-Salwe, Abdisalam M. "The Internet and the Somali Diaspora: The Web as a New Means of Expression." *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 6 (2006): 54-67. Print.

Resources

The resources funding existing media depend on the ownership of individual outlets. Government media such as Radio Hargeisa and Somaliland National Television subsist on public funding. USAID, through DAI, has provided assistance to Somaliland National Television, in the form of equipment. Most private outlets are small scale, and often opened for political or other interests, rather than to earn a profit. Individual or pooled funding may have provided the initial seed capital, while advertising provides a main source of current revenue. Given their larger audience, broadcast outlets are more likely to attract advertising than the printed press; sales of newspapers are insufficient to cover costs. Though the advertising market is growing, understanding of its benefits remains limited.

The absence of greater resources and a lack of ethical norms create vulnerability towards “envelope” or paid journalism, in which journalists receive funds from individuals to provide coverage in one direction or another.¹⁸⁶ Little training, poor pay, limited job security (including competition from journalists willing to work for less money or unbound by ethical concerns) and weak support (or outright pressure) from owners or managers may further contribute to corruption within the sector.

Few international actors provide funding for media, and those that do may inadvertently contribute to expectations of for-fee content, particularly when coverage leans towards public relations for a particular project or organization, rather than reporting on a specific issue or topic. Some media believe that international actors are more likely to provide funding to local non-governmental organizations to produce media-related programming, on health for example, leading to a sense of competition between media and civil society. Others also believe that the international community is more likely to place advertising in government, rather than private media.

Alliances and Strategies

The Somalia Media Support Group, co-chaired by the U.S. Embassy on behalf of a donors’ group that includes the leadership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, drafted a *Media Sector Support Strategy* for the years 2013-2015. The strategy seeks to develop free, independent and pluralistic media in accordance with the 2011-2015 UN Somali Assistance Strategy on human security and good governance. Its recommendations were shaped by European Union-funded research by BBC Media Action¹⁸⁷ and include a focus on regulation, capacity building and audience responsiveness. Because the strategy covers Somalia in total, it is difficult at times to determine which elements address Somaliland in particular, and the status of its implementation did not arise over the course of this assessment. Efforts towards media assistance in Somaliland should aim to coordinate with this strategy, to the extent possible, including any relevant projects resulting from an April 2013 European Union call for proposals to support three pillars of the strategy, defined as legal, capacity building and audience.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ International organizations are expected to pay for coverage of their events and activities as well.

¹⁸⁷ *An Analysis of the Somali Media Environment*. Rep. N.p.: BBC World Service Trust, 2011. Print.

¹⁸⁸ European Union. Delegation in Kenya - Somalia Mission. *The EU Launches a Call for Proposals Worth €4,980,000 for Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development*. N.p., 25 Apr. 2013. Web. <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/somalia/documents/press_corner/ec_press_release_-

The *Media Sector Support Strategy* also aims to align itself with the goals expressed in the *National Development Plan*, which addresses the information and media sector under its infrastructure pillar. Priorities under the plan include the following:

- Ensure access to quality, affordable broadcasting services across the country;
- Develop broadcasting infrastructure;
- Migrate from analogue to digital broadcasting technology;
- Enact and operationalize laws to manage the broadcastings services;
- Support Public-Private Partnership arrangements to extend coverage of the broadcasting services across the country;
- Develop and implement a policy, legal, and regulatory framework for the media;
- Formulate and harmonize policies and laws governing private channels;
- Develop policy guidelines for the establishment of a broadcasting infrastructure to create more equitable access to quality program services; and
- Reform and enable the media sector to contribute to promoting human rights and supporting social development agendas.

The *National Development Plan's* dedicated projects primarily concern equipment and related needs for government-owned media, including transmitters, outside broadcasting vans and construction at the Ministry of Information.

There do not appear to be any clear or formal alliances between the media and other sectors. Some local media stakeholders report favorable access to government and other partners, while others note certain difficulties; there are no institutionalized mechanisms for access, including no law on access to information. Media and civil society do not appear to be cooperating on common goals, whether working together to promote coverage of civil society issues, or uniting in what could be common causes, such as the allocation of private radio licenses or the protection of journalists.

Codes of conduct – outlining both the rights and responsibilities of media – have been developed for the 2005 and 2010 elections.¹⁸⁹ In 2005, the BBC World Service Trust, the Academy for Peace and Development and the National Electoral Commission worked with members of the Somaliland media to develop and adopt a media code of conduct. The code of conduct was adopted on July 6, 2005, in Hargeisa by members of the Somaliland media.¹⁹⁰ Interpeace and its local partner the Academy for Peace and Development, again at the request of the National Electoral Commission, facilitated a training workshop for Somaliland media on

[_ec_launches_cfp_for_nsa_2013.pdf](#)>. and Abdi, Jamal, and James Deane. *The Media of Somalia: A Force for Moderation?* Issue brief no. 4. London: BBC World Service Trust, 2011. Print.

¹⁸⁹ *Somaliland Media Code of Conduct*. 25 Apr. 2010. Hargeisa.

http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland_Media_Code_of_Conduct-English_Final.pdf and *Media Code of Conduct for the 2005 Somaliland Lections*. Aug. 2005. Hargeisa. <<http://www.rjionline.org/MAS-Codes-Somaliland-2005-Elections>>.

¹⁹⁰ *A Vote for Peace: How Somaliland Successfully Hosted Its First Parliamentary Elections in 35 Years*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2006. Print, p. 63-64.

elections reporting which culminated in the signing of a 2010 media code of conduct on April 25, 2010, in Hargeisa. Signatories included the Union of Somaliland Journalists, the Somaliland Women's Journalist Association, Somaliland Journalists Association, the National Electoral Commission and the Ministry of Information.¹⁹¹

Future Considerations

Independent oversight of implementation of the *National Development Plan* may help address two particularly immediate issues: the status of legal reform and the possibilities for the government to fulfill its promise to grant radio licenses. That the government specifically acknowledged these two needs – although it did not include specific action items towards their accomplishment – provides some leverage towards ensuring they remain on the agenda.

The *National Development Plan* also raises the issue of digitalization (also known as digital conversion),¹⁹² which will require all broadcast media operating on terrestrial signals to move to digital platforms as the international deadline (currently set for 2015) for the switch-off of analog signals approaches. Worldwide, digital conversion has been a complicated process involving new frequency and licensing plans, new equipment for broadcast outlets and new receivers for viewers. A solid strategy, developed with the input of stakeholders representing various interests, would help ensure that the process does not lead to the closure of outlets or further limit the public's ability to access information.

Recent closures of media outlets may suggest a need to take a closer look at trends with regard to a shrinking space for freedom of the press, particularly among opposition voices. In June 2013, for example, independent newspaper *Hubaal* was banned by a Hargeisa court on orders by the Somaliland attorney general's office, months after its publisher had also been attacked.¹⁹³ In July, *Hubaal's* editor was sentenced to two years in prison, while the paper's manager was sentenced to one year. The charges – defamation and false publication of news capable of disturbing public order – stemmed from two separate articles: one in January, accusing Ethiopian diplomatic staff of smuggling illicit goods, and another in June, asserting that Somaliland's president was in poor health.¹⁹⁴ Both men were pardoned a month later, and the ban on the paper was lifted.

¹⁹¹ *A Vote for Peace II: A Report on the 2010 Somaliland Presidential Election Process*. Rep. Hargeisa: Academy for Peace and Development/Interpeace, 2012. Print, p. 148-153.

¹⁹² Mwit, Lee. "The Great Digital Migration: A Switch Too Far for Africa?" *Africa Review*. Nation Media Group, 27 Mar. 2013. Web. <<http://www.africareview.com/Special-Reports/For-Africa-digital-remains-in-the-future-/979182/1731620/-/v5tyk2z/-/index.html>>.

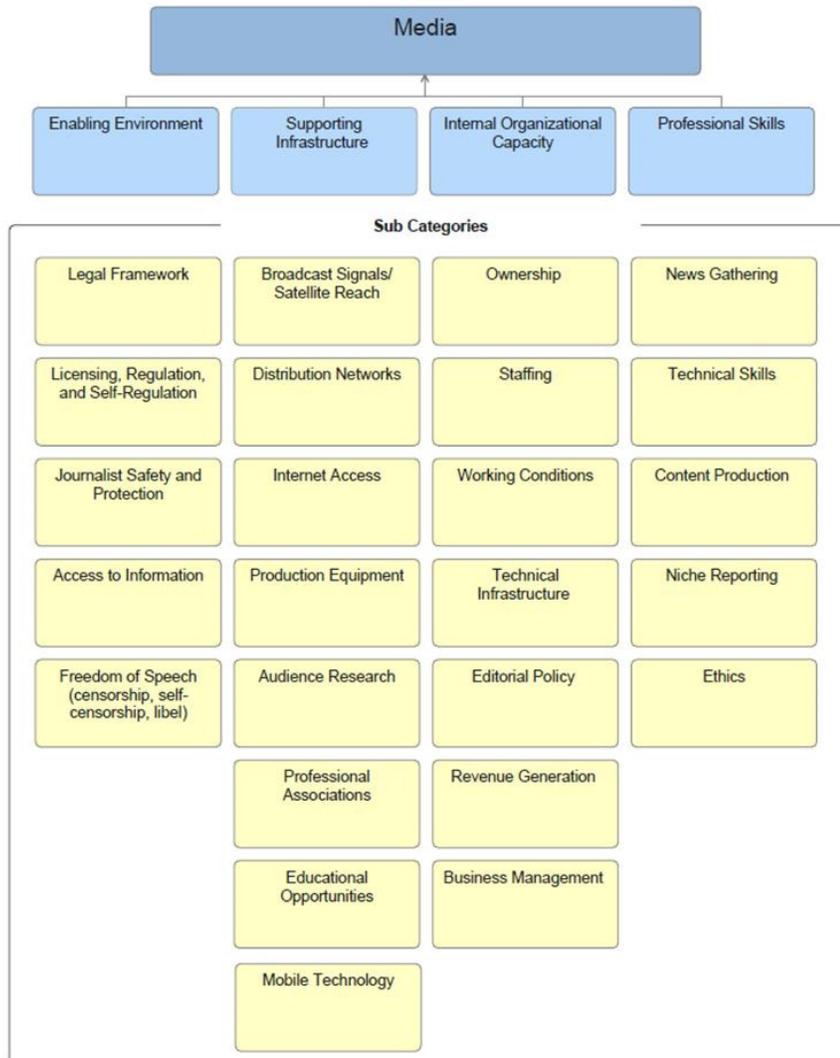
¹⁹³ Goth, Goth M. "Somaliland: Court Bans Hubaal Newspaper, One of the Leading Somali Language Daily." *Hubaal*. Somalilandpress, 06 Nov. 2013. Web. <http://somalilandpress.com/somalilandcourt-bans-hubaal-newspapera-leading-somali-language-daily-42449>, Goth, Goth M. "Somaliland: Opposition Parties Condemn Government Crack Down On Media." Somalilandpress, n.d. Web. <http://somalilandpress.com/somalilandopposition-parties-condemn-government-crack-down-on-media-42458>, Hasan, Yusuf M. "Somaliland: Attack on Hubaal Media House Raises Hue and Cry." *Somaliland Sun*. N.p., 28 Mar. 2013. Web. <http://somalilandsun.com/index.php/community/2793-somaliland-attack-on-hubaal-media-house-raises-hue-and-cry> and Hasan, Yusuf M. "Somaliland: Attack on Hubaal Media House Raises Hue and Cry." *Somaliland Sun*. N.p., 28 Mar. 2013. Web. <<http://somalilandsun.com/index.php/community/2793-somaliland-attack-on-hubaal-media-house-raises-hue-and-cry>>.

¹⁹⁴ Barkhad, Dahir. "Somaliland Court under Fire over Hubaal Convictions." *Sabahi*. N.p., 5 July 2013. Web. <http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/07/05/feature-01>.

Somaliland Strategy Analysis Framework: Media

For the purposes of this democratization strategy assessment, analysis of media interests, needs and priorities took place within a framework developed based on issues that cut across the sector as a whole, both above it and within it. It loosely corresponds to the categories addressed by the IREX media sustainability index.

A graphical representation of the Somaliland media framework is shown below:



This framework includes categories and sub-categories of media work, interests, and influences, both real and potential in the case of Somaliland. Some of the subcategories were not addressed at all by Somalilanders in interviews or workshops due to lack of time, knowledge, or perceived prioritization on the part of Somalilander participants, but are nonetheless helpful to identify next steps, relative priorities and overlap with donor interests.

The top level boxes in light blue identify major categories of media influences and internal and external roles and responsibilities. The lower level boxes in yellow identify sub-categories of media influences (such as access to information) and roles and responsibilities related to each of the major categories. These are general headings and as such comprise a number of different media influences and activities.

Media priorities discussed in the following section are organized by these categories and subcategories. Some subcategories are not discussed; those that are not discussed were not mentioned at all by workshop participants or to a significant degree by interviewees.

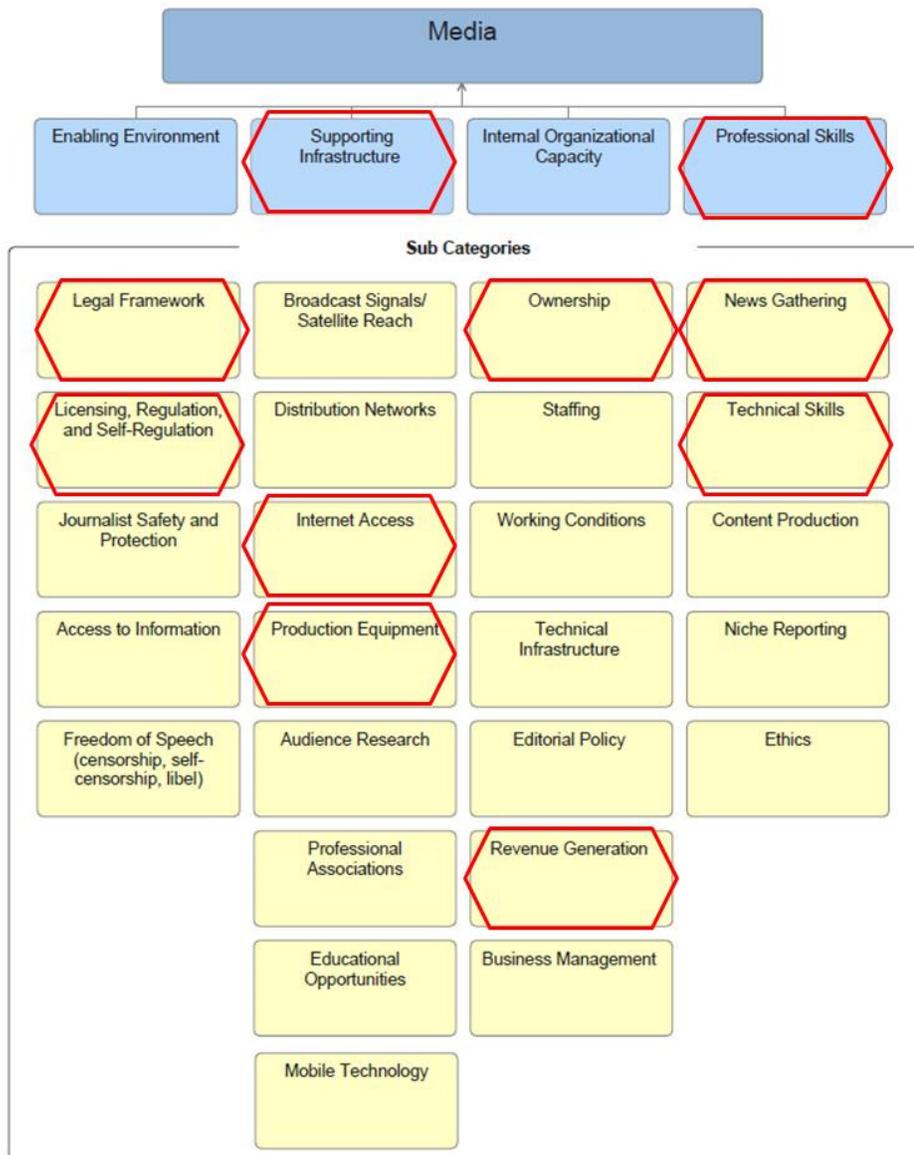
Media Priorities for Democratization

The stakeholders participating in the strategy prioritization workshop identified their vision of the media sector as one that meets the needs of the people and serves as the “fourth pillar” (that is, the fourth estate) of government, parallel to the executive, legislature, and judiciary. Discussions on priorities centered on four categories, with the following order of prioritization:

1. Professional Skills: addressing needs among individual journalists.
2. Supporting Infrastructure: such as broadcast signals or journalist associations.
3. Internal Capacity: addressing issues within individual outlets.
4. The Enabling Environment: such as the legal framework.

Workshop participants almost universally chose professional skills as their number one priority, with supporting infrastructure receiving some interest as well. Internal capacity was the third chosen priority category followed by enabling environment, which emerged as the lowest priority. Stakeholder interviews also identified professional skills as their top concern.

Media participants, through interviews, strategy workshop outputs and discussions, prioritized different subcategories of media influences and roles and responsibilities. The prioritized subcategories are highlighted below with red boxes:



Note that those that are not highlighted as high priorities may have been listed as medium priority or low priority, or may not have been mentioned at all by participants. The following section describes the high, medium, and low priorities raised by media stakeholders within each of these categories in further detail.

Professional Skills

News Gathering/Technical Skills

Within professional skills, participants rated journalism training, primarily in news gathering and technical skills, as the highest priority for assistance. As noted by one participant, “Professional skills are most important...What we are lacking is professional skills...If we get professional people they can build internal capacity and everything else.” This sentiment was echoed in stakeholder interviews as well: “If you try to help us, please don't give us money...Please try to train us...The knowledge of journalism is lack[ing]. Somaliland media

needs only knowledge. They don't need money...they need knowledge. So if we get enough knowledge, I think we will do our best.”

The second priority within this category was training in media law (separate from discussions on media law under the enabling environment), as a way of teaching journalists both their rights and their responsibilities. The most controversial split under this category was training “journalists to be patriots,” reflecting a clear distinction in the expectations of government media (which the government uses to get its messages across) versus private media (among whose roles is to serve as a government watchdog). Lowest among the priorities under this category was good governance in media associations, a subject which on the whole did not receive much discussion during the workshops. Stakeholder interviewees, however, did acknowledge the importance of association development.

Supporting Infrastructure

Production Equipment

Discussions under supporting infrastructure primarily centered on equipment, including printing machines for newspapers and needs for broadcasters such as cameras and editing suites. The equipment of most outlets is reportedly outdated, limiting their ability to produce quality content and subsequently to attract audiences. Local respondents are aware that, particularly for audiences with access to Internet and satellite, they are competing with a number of other Somali-language options, including those based in the diaspora. As one noted, “they won’t watch [our television] just because it’s from Somaliland. This is a problem of Somali television...they don’t give good content or picture or enough sophisticated things.” There was less awareness of the connection between attracting audiences and attracting advertisers (which could help generate revenue that could help improve content).

Internet Access/Educational Opportunities

Participants rated Internet speed as a medium priority under this category, though it appeared that the focus on Internet related more to the media’s ability to deliver content, rather than to the public’s ability to access it. Given the focus on professional skills, participants surprisingly ranked university journalism education at a low level, particularly as some noted that independent academic programs would be the best way to provide long-term training. Participants also raised the problem of a lack of qualified local trainers, stating that the skills of existing trainers would also need to be upgraded.

Internal Capacity

Ownership/Revenue Generation

Within the category of internal capacity, participants rated their number one priority as the need of owners to both have a stronger understanding of the media sector and sufficient funds to operate their outlets. While discussion of this issue appeared a bit unclear, it may derive from the pressures that owners may place on journalists to deviate from professional journalism standards. Strengthening knowledge of these standards among owners would seek to prevent their “dictating what the journalist should do,” as one participant put it. Discussions under this category returned again to the question of equipment, and in particular, expectations that owners should be able to provide their staff with proper equipment. As part of this discussion, participants acknowledged that they would need to be trained on the new equipment as well. Surprisingly, however, participants ranked as low priority the development of revenue

departments, which could help owners generate the income they need to invest in staff. One participant did note, however, the importance of training the business community on the benefits of media advertising. Participants also ranked as a low priority the need to change hiring processes, in particular, the need to hire staff based on knowledge rather than clan affiliation or networks.

Enabling Environment

Legal Framework/Licensing, Regulation, Self-Regulation

Lastly, within the category of the enabling environment, participants ranked highest the need to change the existing media law, and the importance of media stakeholders uniting as part of this process. Participants believed that on the whole they have freedom, but that the legal framework needs to be completed. Among the medium priority areas under this category fell issues such as accrediting journalists, establishing discipline committees, and protecting journalists through training for police and other institutions.

Priority Opportunities for International Support

In the Somaliland media sector, there is a disconnect between some of the more startling bigger-picture issues – an incomplete legal framework, the lack of private radio stations, the closure of selected outlets – and the almost universal focus on the part of interviewees and strategy workshop participants on improving professional skills. To a degree, some of these issues are closely linked: greater professionalism on the part of journalists could help defend against government fears and resulting efforts to control media outlets. A sole focus on professional skills, however, would neglect the degree to which each piece of the puzzle is related to one another, and would ignore the importance of taking a more holistic approach towards improving the climate for the benefit all key players – the media, the government and the public. Towards this goal, recommended opportunities for support include the following:

Opportunity 1: Support efforts to advance legal clarity by promoting an inclusive drafting process.

The implementation of a sound legal framework remains necessary to provide the basic foundation for the development of media in Somaliland. Ideally, such a framework would provide for an equitable balance between public and private media, including independent regulatory bodies that would help protect both from undue government interference. A fair drafting process would include input from all interested parties – including media themselves as well as civil society – and allow for public discussion. Assistance in this direction would need to fully understand and coordinate with recent efforts towards legal reform.

Opportunity 2: Provide in-depth training and on-the-job mentoring to improve the level of professionalism of journalists and media outlets, including advanced training to create a cadre of local experts.

Short-term, off-site seminars would be insufficient to provide the substantial changes that need to take place in order to significantly improve the level of professionalism within the Somaliland media. The most effective training would be a tailored combination of methods

covering the theoretical basics of professional journalism (including an emphasis on ethics), on-the-ground field work in news gathering and story production, and in-house, side-by-side mentoring focused on technical and editorial skills. Such training would need to include staff at all levels of a media outlet, to ensure that owners and managers create the space necessary for journalists to implement what they learn. It should also include business, financial, management and related skills that would help improve the overall manner in which outlets function. International or regional trainers may be necessary for initial efforts, complemented by a train-the-trainers component that is geared towards creating a sustainable base of local experts capable of delivering such training themselves.

Opportunity 3: Support in-kind equipment donation or equipment purchases to raise quality of production.

Almost all local media stakeholders emphasized the importance of modernizing their equipment and the difficulties with affording to do so. It is not uncommon in media development programs to assist with equipment, and such assistance would be valid, though it is recommended with some caution. Requests for equipment could benefit from an expert audit of technical needs, to ensure appropriateness and compatibility and may be more effective if tied to other forms of assistance. Transparent competition or other similar processes may help avoid appearances of bias or favoritism.

Opportunity 4: Support activities to build trust between government and media to increase understanding and reduce tensions, and nurture alternate conflict resolution mechanisms.

The current situation reflects a level of mistrust and misunderstanding between the government and the media, including a lack of awareness of the rights and responsibilities of both. Confidence-building measures would seek to bring the two sides together to help increase understanding and reduce tensions between the two sectors, with a goal of finding alternate mechanisms for resolving differences outside of unsubstantiated tabloidism and heavy-handed police action. Opportunities for assistance could include empowering an international or local partner to play a convening role for discussion and debate; supporting specific events, activities, *fora*, conferences, etc. that bring different actors together, funding joint campaigns or programming/content on issues of shared concern or conducting joint trainings on common goals.

Opportunity 5: Support implementing partners to play a convening role (facilitating dialogue, debate and discussion), to build alliances between media and other sectors in advance of common goals.

Though the media community appears to have the support of the public, it does not appear to have wider support from other sectors. In particular, the media could benefit from additional support from civil society, which should ultimately share in common goals. Advocacy towards the licensing of private radio stations, for example, should be in the interest of all active stakeholders, as it would extend the possibilities for delivering key information to citizens. Greater cooperation between civil society and the media could also help to develop and deliver

content vital to improving the lives of the public, whether civic education or HIV prevention. Strengthening ties between the media and the business community would also be mutually beneficial in increasing the opportunities for income generation for both sectors.

Opportunity 6: Fund research to provide reliable, independent data on audience share, market share, circulation, and the like.

Many local stakeholders expressed a desire for assistance with conducting audience research, so that they would know their viewers and readers better and be in a stronger position to respond to their needs and interests. Reliable, independent data on audience share, market share, circulation and the like would provide an additional mechanism for accountability of the sector and could help demonstrate the degree to which quality attracts quantity. In addition to providing a foundation for stronger feedback mechanisms, it would also help develop clearer guidelines for advertising, which is key to sustaining the revenue stream for private outlets. Assistance should include working with media outlets to interpret data and integrate results into their operations, as well as ensure that local individuals and organizations develop the tools and skills necessary to conduct such research independently.

Opportunity 7: Support education about and utilization of new technologies among journalists and media outlets.

More than any other sector in the field of democracy and governance, the media sector continues to shift and evolve in response to the growth of new technologies. In many markets, this has upended traditional news gathering and business models, and sophisticated outlets in even the most developed countries face ongoing challenges in meeting changing needs and demands. New technologies can also offer the opportunity to leapfrog over existing technology, bypassing their limitations. The proliferation of mobile technology, for example, provides new possibilities for delivering information to citizens and should be explored among the options for improving access and developing creative content. External support can help bring international and regional experts and best practices to Somaliland, as well as assist outlets in adapting models and tools to the local context.

Opportunity 8: Consider the development of media associations as media advocates and centers of technical media expertise.

Though the possibilities for greater association development do not appear clear at the moment, stakeholders recognize that stronger – and more united – associations would address a number of the challenges facing the media sector. They would be, for example, the first line of defense for journalists and outlets facing arrest and closure and serve as leaders in advocating for cross-cutting media concerns, such as completion of the legal framework or the licensing of private radio. Associations could also take the lead on nurturing a pool of local trainers that could provide technical assistance to the entire media community. Support for association development could include targeted capacity building through embedded advisors and greater links to successful associations elsewhere to expand access to knowledge and build wider solidarity networks.

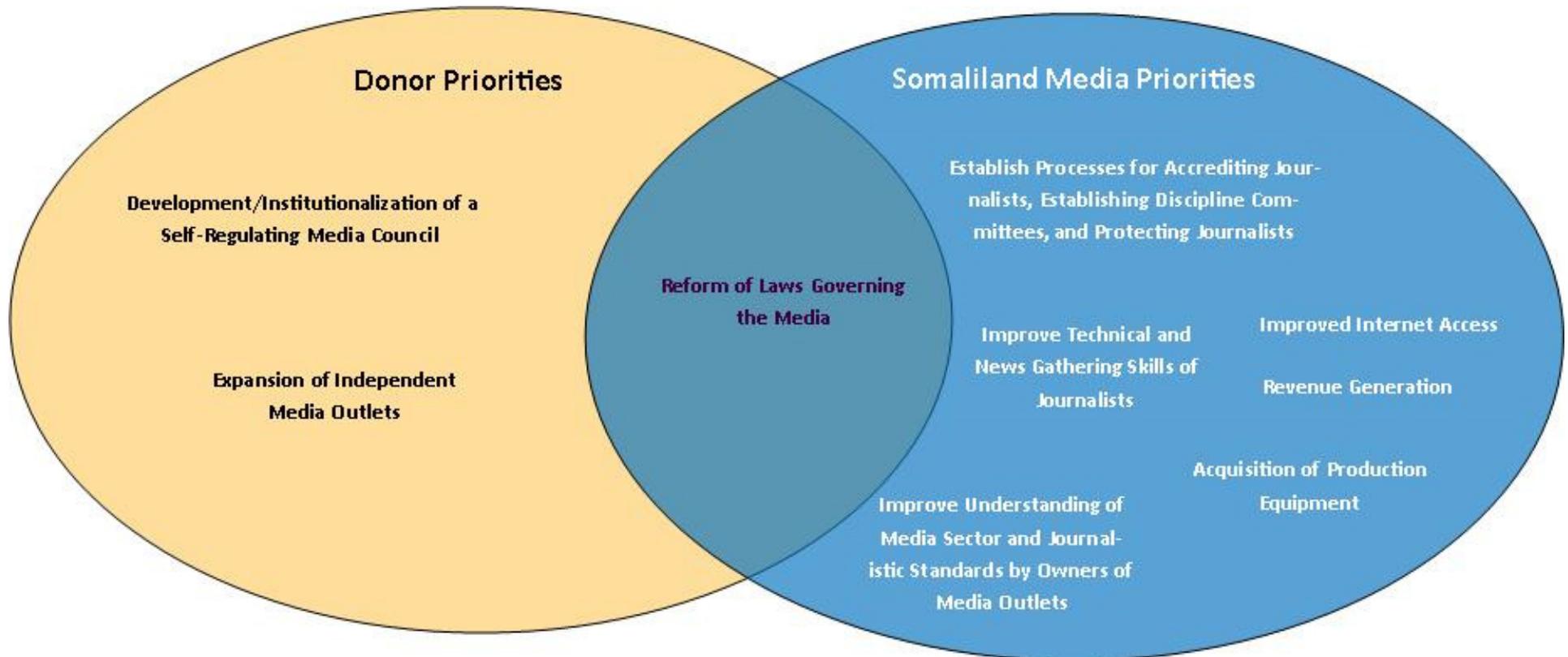
Opportunity 9: In the long term, explore the development of media degree programs.

The value and effectiveness of developing academic programs in journalism also remain unclear for the moment. In the medium term, it would be more important to focus on existing, practicing journalists rather than to produce additional reporters at the entry level. In the longer term, a solid degree program would be worthy of examination, provided that it builds both theoretical and technical skills and responds to the needs of the market. A specific feasibility study would be recommended before significant investment in this direction.

Opportunity 10: Remain cognizant of how donor assistance can sometimes distort dynamics.

Precisely because there has been little donor investment in the media sector, there is an opportunity and responsibility to be cognizant of how donor assistance can sometimes distort sector dynamics. Despite the sector's challenges, it has succeeded to grow more or less on its own. Efforts to address challenges should take lessons learned from other sectors and other environments to help ensure that they do not inadvertently exacerbate existing differences between the government and independent media, between journalists and their managers, or between outlets and the market.

Opportunity Map



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