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## **Think local. Governance, humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding in Somalia**

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### **SUMMARY**

This study seeks to understand the incentives and interests - or lack thereof - for collaboration and coordination across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors, as the call for a 'nexus approach' grows louder. It does so by looking at the practical experiences of the international community, including non-traditional donors in Somalia.

The political situation in Somalia is changing. Relative stability should not be mistaken for lasting peace, yet recent progress in the federalisation agenda gives Somalis and external partners hope for long-term recovery and economic development in the country. As Somalia remains heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance, pursuing the 'nexus approach' to bridge the divide between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding is generally seen to be a critical condition for maintaining what has been achieved in the past few years.

Humanitarians, together with the private sector and clan networks, have long been the primary providers of basic services and social protection in Somalia. While this continues to save lives, it has pushed NGOs and implementing partners to deepen, rather than broaden, their expertise and delivery of assistance. In some cases, their interest in securing their niche within the Somali aid environment is greater than their incentive to pragmatically respond to the needs of their beneficiaries.

Relative stability has allowed for innovation at the local level, and we identify several opportunities for further advancing integrated approaches in practice. As the Somali statebuilding process takes root, the real starting point for nexus approaches may well be at the local level, through collaboration among a range of actors from government officials to clan elders, and from civil society to humanitarian, development and peacebuilding practitioners.



## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	i
Acronyms .....	ii
Key Findings .....	v
Introduction .....	1
1. Nexus thinking in development, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding practice .....	1
1.1. The 'triple nexus' .....	1
1.2. Peacebuilding, statebuilding and stabilisation .....	4
2. Statebuilding, foreign aid and the Somali political settlement .....	6
2.1. Foreign aid as a condition for stability .....	8
2.2. Humanitarian aid in a complex political emergency .....	9
3. Structures and actors of the triple nexus in Somalia .....	10
3.1. The Somali National Development Plan and aid architecture .....	11
3.2. The UN and the challenges of inter-agency coordination.....	14
3.3. The NGO community .....	16
3.4. The role of non-traditional and faith-based donors.....	17
4. Joint planning and coordinated action .....	20
4.1. Contextual changes .....	20
4.2. Conceptual bridges: resilience and durable solutions for IDPs .....	21
4.3. Flexible funding and adaptive programming.....	23
4.4. Local governance and area-based approaches .....	25
5. The implications of nexus-centred thinking for governance programming .....	26
6. Conclusions: high ambitions and low incentives for nexus approaches in practice .....	28
Bibliography .....	31

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Linkages between development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding .....	2
Figure 2: Financial flows as a percentage of GDP (2017) .....	10
Figure 3: ODA trends in Somalia (2006-2017) .....	11
Figure 4: Development aid channelled through the SDRF architecture .....	13



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## Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
BRCiS	Building Resilience Communities in Somalia (programme)
CAS	Comprehensive Approach to Security
CRESTA/A	Community Recovery and Extension of State Authority/Accountability
DDLG	Democracy, Decentralisation and Local Governance Division (SDC department)
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee (UK)
DFID	(UK) Department for International Development
DSI	Durable Solutions Initiative
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
DSRSG/RC/HC	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
EU	European Union
EUTF	European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal member states (of Somalia)
FNTC	Federalisation Negotiation Technical Committee
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross domestic product
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator (UN)
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDP	Humanitarian, development and peacebuilding
HDPI	Humanitarian Development Peace Initiative
HRVP	High Representative and Vice President of the European Union
ICVA	International Council for Voluntary Agencies
IDA	International Development Association
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally displaced person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JPLG	(UN) Joint Programme for Local Governance and Decentralised Service Delivery
MIA	Mogadishu International Airport

MoPIED	Ministry of Planning Investment and Economic Development
MPF	Multi-Partner Fund
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NDC	National Development Council
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NLF	National Leadership Forum
NSC	National Security Council
NWoW	New Way of Working
OCHA	Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIC	Organisation for Islamic Cooperation
PSG	Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal
RC	Resident Coordinator
RE-INTEG	Enhancing Somalia's responsiveness to the management and reintegration of mixed migration flows (EU Trust Fund Project)
RRF	Recovery and Resilience Framework
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SDRF	Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility
SG	Secretary-General of the United Nations
SHARE	Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience (EU strategy)
SIF	Somalia Infrastructure Fund (AfDB)
SNSF	Somali National Security Forces
SomRep	Somalia Resilience Programme
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSF	Somalia Stability Fund
TGS	Transitional Government of Somalia
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission to Somalia
US	United States

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme



## Key Findings

Linking short-term humanitarian aid with long-term development cooperation is an age-old challenge. At a policy level, multilateral organisations and bilateral agencies have made great advances in institutionalising the integration of development aid and humanitarian assistance. More recently, the ‘triple nexus’ between humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding has become a commonly used term, especially in the context of the UN reform agenda and the ‘New Way of Working’ (NWoW).

This study seeks to better understand what a nexus approach to security, humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and development cooperation means for decision-making on governance support, in terms of both strategic direction and concrete operational choices. It does so by looking at the practical experiences of the international community in Somalia.

The political situation in Somalia is changing. Although relative stability should not be mistaken for lasting peace, recent progress on the federalisation agenda has given Somalis and their external partners some hope of long-term recovery and economic development. As Somalia remains heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance, pursuing integrated approaches and bridging the divide between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding are generally seen as critical preconditions for sustaining the progress made during the past few years. This is easier said than done, though.

Somalia’s network of donors is a dense maze of foreign and regional donors, UN agencies, NGOs and implementing organisations. While most actors agree that the current political situation warrants reforming or even redirecting international support, this consensus has not always been followed by sufficient reflection on the interests and incentives at work in the international support community that can either drive or block different ways of working.

At the same time, the aid landscape in Somalia is changing. Non-traditional donors such as Turkey and the Gulf states are increasingly present in Somali politics and aid flows. While this is an issue that merits a study of its own, preliminary findings indicate that these countries prefer direct bilateral support to state authorities or infrastructure projects. They also tend to participate much less in traditional multilateral coordinating mechanisms and do not make the same distinction between relief, development and post-conflict recovery as most Western donors do.

In the absence of functioning state structures, humanitarian aid, together with the private sector and clan networks, has long been a primary source of basic services and social protection in Somalia. While this has saved, and indeed continues to save, countless lives, it has also produced a degree of path dependency that is difficult to break away from. Agencies, NGOs and implementing organisations tend to focus on specialisation and the effective delivery of assistance, but often only in their respective domains. In some cases, they are keener to maintain their niches in the Somali aid environment than to pursue the most pragmatic responses to the needs of beneficiaries.

In other words, silos separating sectors and disciplines in Somalia are still very much the norm. That said, there are opportunities for advancing integrated approaches. Resilience, for example, is seen as a useful concept for programming, and resonates with practitioners better than ‘the humanitarian aid-development-peacebuilding nexus’.

As the federal statebuilding process takes root, the real starting point for integrated or nexus approaches may well be at a local level. Regional and local administrations are gradually being established and the

challenge of coordination reverberates from Mogadishu to the federal member states and local administrations. Tackling some of Somalia's challenges not through a sector-based but through an area-based approach encompassing a range of stakeholders, including public officials, private sector and traditional leaders, is a promising novelty.

The main findings of this study are as follows:

1. **Over the past decade, there has been a paradigm shift towards seeing Somalia as a fragile statebuilding project rather than as a textbook case of a perpetual humanitarian emergency.** This shift has rallied the international community and regional actors towards resilience-building, longer-term development programming and, most of all, towards ensuring territorial control and developing a state apparatus that could eventually take full responsibility for the security and development needs of Somalia and its people.
2. **The discursive commitment to integrated approaches and long-term planning is not matched by the resources and enthusiasm needed to operationalise it.** While international donors are pushing for the coordination of humanitarian, development and security and peacebuilding action as a panacea for dealing with fragile countries like Somalia, there is a mismatch between rhetoric (or ambition) and the contextual reality. There is little in the way of a 'nexus' on the ground in Somalia. Nor have donors changed their siloed funding windows, or are implementing organisations ready to bridge the gap between their sectoral specialisations.
3. **Nexus approaches generate incremental gains and are difficult to implement in a top-down manner.** The concept of resilience is reasonably well accepted among humanitarian and development actors. In addition to programmes geared at resilience, there have also been cases of programmes combining a short-term humanitarian response with long-term development objectives. Flexible programme design is also becoming common practice, as both donors and implementers plan to restrict the impact of micro- and macro-crises that might arise beyond the project planning cycle. What is clear, however, is that the humanitarian-development nexus has taken much firmer root than the development-peacebuilding or the three-legged nexus.
4. **'Localising' nexus approaches can potentially energise abstract policy concepts.** For a long time, much energy and investment has gone into planning top-down processes in Somalia, from establishing a federal state structure to pushing a nexus agenda. It is becoming increasingly clear that the greatest potential for 'success' – be it to sustain a federal system or to achieve development – lies at a local level, (i.e. federal member states and districts). As Somalia remains relatively stable (compared with recent years), there are good opportunities to use area-based approaches to achieve cross-sectoral coordination and longer-term programming at a local level. But this requires flexibility in funding and adaptive approaches to programme design and management.
5. **The challenge for international support is to move beyond state re-establishment to local development** and the delivery of basic services (such as healthcare, education and food security), the integration of IDPs, dependable justice, land administration, etc. Nexus-centred thinking could help develop a local governance agenda that empowers nascent and fragile federal member states and local authorities to respond to challenges involving humanitarian needs, development and peacebuilding objectives.

## Introduction

Improving the interaction between humanitarian aid and development cooperation is an age-old challenge. At a policy level, multilateral organisations (such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, the European Union (EU)) and bilateral agencies have made considerable advances in institutionalising greater integration, particularly in relation to development aid and humanitarian assistance. More recently, the debate has shifted towards including peace as ‘the third leg of the triangle’ (ICVA 2017: 3). Following the publication of the UN reform agenda and the NWoW, the ‘triple nexus’ between humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding has now become a commonly used term.

This study aims to better understand how a nexus approach to security, humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and development cooperation affects decision-making on governance support, in terms of both strategic direction and operational choices. It does so by looking at the practical experiences of the international community in Somalia.

This study was requested by SDC’s Democracy, Decentralisation and Local Governance Unit (DDLG) in cooperation with the Swiss embassy in Nairobi. It is based both on desk research of policy documents, studies and analysis and on some 25 semi-structured interviews conducted in Bern (Switzerland), Nairobi (Kenya) and Mogadishu (Somalia) between April and July 2018. The interviewees consisted of a wide range of actors: representatives of UN agencies, donors, international and national humanitarian, development and peacebuilding NGOs, and SDC staff working on Somalia (see Annex 2).

This paper is divided into five sections. The first section provides background information on the development of nexus-centred thinking. The second section outlines the nature of political settlements and the politics of aid in Somalia. This is followed by a discussion of the nature of structures and the roles and interests of actors relevant to the nexus in Somalia. The fourth section identifies existing and new opportunities for coordinated action in Somalia. The fifth section looks at the implications of the above for governance programming in a fragile environment. The paper ends with a set of conclusions which serves as a summary.

## 1. Nexus thinking in development, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding practice

### 1.1. The ‘triple nexus’

The idea of a ‘nexus’ is not new. In the 1980s, practitioners and academics identified a critical gap between humanitarian assistance and development activities surrounding the food crisis in Africa. This led to the emergence of the concept of **‘linking relief, rehabilitation and development’**. The idea was to improve the linear progression from short-term relief to longer-term development cooperation (Ramet 2012: 4). Many further attempts to reconcile humanitarian aid and development cooperation have been made since then (Medinilla et al. 2016). In recent years, the Sustainable Development Goals and the **‘New Way of Working’** (NWoW)<sup>1</sup> have sought to offer a path for removing persistent barriers to collaboration in the

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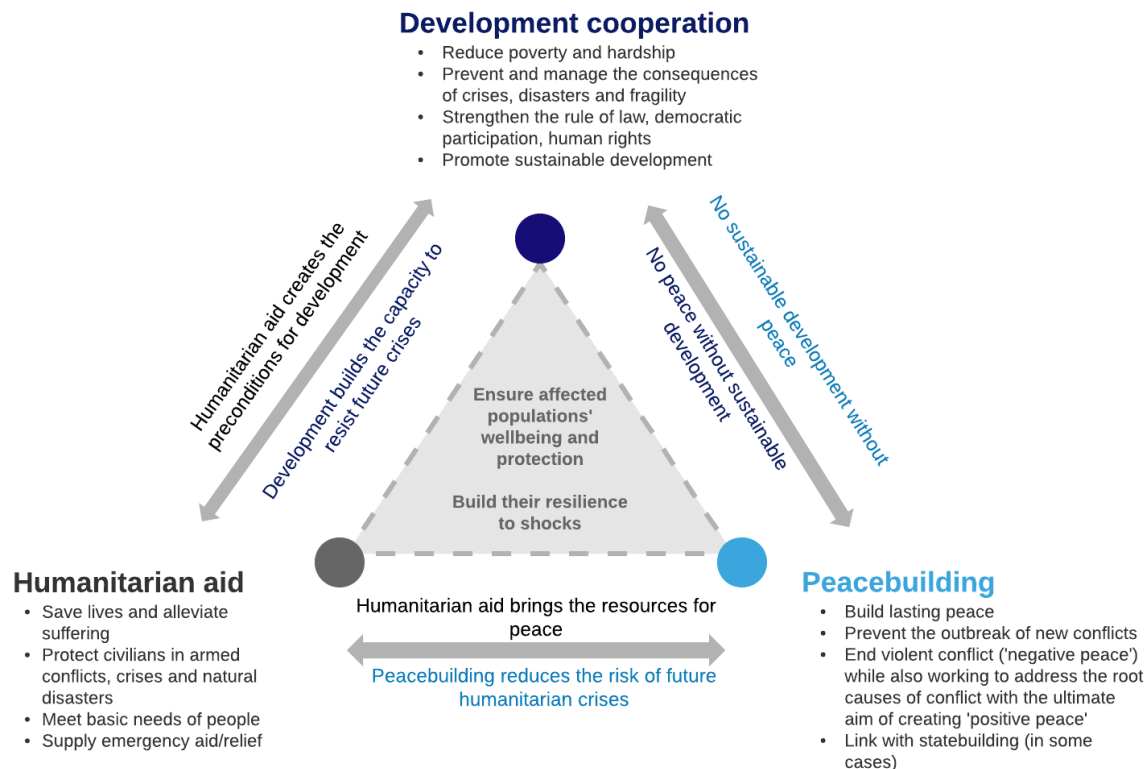
<sup>1</sup> Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the heads of UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, OCHA, WFP, FAO, UNFPA and UNDP, with the endorsement of the World Bank and the International Organization for Migration, signed at the World Humanitarian Summit a “Commitment to Action” document, in which they agreed on a New Way of Working in crises. Its aim is not only to meet humanitarian needs, but also to reduce needs, risks and vulnerability over time (Agenda for Humanity, 2016).

multilateral system, through multi-year programming and by using the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors in order to achieve collective outcomes (OCHA 2017: 6).

More recently, the idea of a **'triple nexus'**, i.e. also including security, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, has become prominent.<sup>2</sup> This has come into being mainly out of a concern that, in conflict contexts, humanitarian aid can easily exacerbate the situation.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, aid can disrupt existing power dynamics, be perceived as a 'resource' to contest, and be instrumentalised as a means of achieving political gains (for example by serving or depriving certain communities). Aid can also sustain warring parties or allow governments to shift resources to military budgets, by providing essential services no longer delivered by the state (Lange and Quinn 2003).

The NWoW originally focused on collaboration between humanitarian and development actors. However, in the statement he made on taking office in December 2016, the UN Secretary-General called for 'sustaining peace' to be considered as 'the third leg of the triangle' (ICVA 2017: 3). The EU also 'recognises the linkages between sustainable development, humanitarian action and conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as the importance of diplomatic and political solutions to support peace and security' (Council of the European Union 2017). While the EU has long attempted to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and development cooperation, its operationalisation of the humanitarian-development nexus in six pilot countries now also explicitly includes conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This takes the form of a 'triple nexus' approach in which all relevant actors (i.e. humanitarian, development and diplomatic actors) are asked to work together to address the root causes of vulnerability, fragility and conflict, and to build resilience (Jones and Mazzara 2018).

**Figure 1: Linkages between development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding**



Source: ECDPM

<sup>2</sup> While some initial work on conflict, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding can be traced back to the early 2000s (Lange and Quinn 2003), this did not gain much traction in mainstream development and humanitarian thinking.

<sup>3</sup> Conflicts drive 80% of all humanitarian needs (World Bank, 2018).

There are different rationales behind global and EU triple nexus initiatives:

1. **Development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actors all have the same broad objective**, namely to contribute to the protection and well-being of affected populations and to improve their resilience to external and internal shocks;
2. **Humanitarian, development, and – where appropriate – peace/security actors have a more lasting positive impact**, particularly in protracted crises, when they pull together in the same direction instead of operating in silos (ICVA 2017: 5);
3. **For target communities, the distinction between humanitarian, development and peace and security efforts is artificial**. Fragmentation based on the way donors organise resources undermines their capacity to fulfil the interconnected needs of vulnerable people (Murphy 2018).

There is a renewed drive among the donor community to bring together policy frameworks for humanitarian aid, development cooperation and increasingly conflict prevention and peacebuilding, so as to promote cooperation at least, and joint planning at best. In reality, this often remains a superficial or theoretical exercise. Interviews often point to a **disconnect between policy-makers and practitioners in many development/humanitarian agencies, in their understanding of what a ‘nexus’ is or is supposed to achieve**. Many practitioners see ‘nexus thinking’ as a mere bureaucratic requirement imposed by headquarters. Blanket approaches to the integration of humanitarian aid and development cooperation - let alone peacebuilding - are often seen as over simplistic or as merely adding to agencies’ administrative burdens. Furthermore, there is no universal understanding of what a nexus approach is or should be. At times, understandings may even conflict with each other. Even if all actors were to succeed in identifying common objectives to work towards, it is unclear *how* donors and implementers should go about achieving this end (the triple nexus).

Typical challenges to the use of nexus approaches in practice are:

- **Different normative frameworks**. Development cooperation pursues openly political objectives, including strengthening governance and transforming economies, while humanitarian assistance is based on the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence (OCHA 2012: 1). On the one hand, these principles are central to establishing and maintaining humanitarian access and providing assistance and protection according to needs. In complex conflict situations such as Somalia, the role of the international community is such that it is difficult, if not impossible, to be perceived as neutral and impartial by the local population.
- **Institutional incompatibility**. Development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding are fragmented, both conceptually and in their implementation.<sup>4</sup> As a result, they come with different time frames and lines of funding. This often limits their flexibility and interoperability.
- **Capacity and nexus skills within organisations**. Humanitarians may lack the skills (or the time) to integrate conflict analysis in their work, while many peacebuilding organisations have neither the technical capacity nor the financial resources to engage and collaborate with their development and humanitarian counterparts. There is also no general consensus on what a triple nexus precisely entails. Some interpret it as an approach to coordination (with each actor playing its own respective role), while others see it as an attempt to make peacebuilders out of development practitioners and development actors out of humanitarians.

<sup>4</sup> This is not the case for every donor, however. The UK Department for International Development (DFID), for instance, does not have separate departments for humanitarian and development aid, and the overall budget is centrally determined. DFID has also traditionally worked with multi-year time frames.

- **Organisations' interests and incentives.** Tools (such as joint analysis) are not enough in themselves to secure change. Many organisations fail to provide sufficient incentives for sharing information or for overcoming a potential risk aversion, leading agencies and implementing partners to settle on compartmentalisation because it is what they know best and it protects their business model.

The gap between policy and practice is even bigger for the 'triple nexus'. Linkages between development cooperation and peacebuilding have been developed over the years, notably by integrating conflict sensitivity tools and approaches into development cooperation planning and implementation. Yet the humanitarian community does not seem to properly understand the term or how peacebuilding is done. Contributing to peace tends to be seen as highly political and conflated with peacekeeping.<sup>5</sup> Often, however, humanitarian and development actors share the same basic ideas and would benefit from working with peacebuilding actors to gain a better and continuous understanding of power dynamics in conflict zones.

## 1.2. Peacebuilding, statebuilding and stabilisation

There seems to be increasing confusion between peacebuilding and other objectives, such as statebuilding, stability and stabilisation. Some donor governments clearly regard greater stability as being essential to their own national security. The 2018 US Stabilization Assistance Review,<sup>6</sup> for instance, states that *'the United States has strong national security and economic interests in reducing levels of violence and promoting stability in areas affected by armed conflict [...]'* and defines stabilisation as *'an inherently political endeavour that requires aligning US Government efforts - diplomatic engagement, foreign assistance, and defense - toward supporting locally legitimate authorities and systems to peaceably manage conflict and prevent conflict'* (Department of State, USAID, Department of Defense 2018). Although stabilisation is considered to be part of a spectrum that also includes both conflict prevention and longer-term peacebuilding and reconciliation, this definition shows that there is no clear conceptual delineation between peacebuilding and stabilisation.

'Stability' also emerged at the centre of the UK's peacebuilding efforts, with the 2011 Building Stability Overseas Strategy, and is a much more commonly used concept than 'peacebuilding'. Stabilisation, as a combination of military and civilian action, has gained ground in the UK since the end of the 2000s. The objective is to quickly build an enabling environment for 'structural stability' in conjunction with longer-term statebuilding and peacebuilding (Stabilisation Unit 2014).<sup>7</sup> While tackling the root causes of instability and helping to resolve conflicts have become key national security interests for the UK, the links between 'peacebuilding' and 'stabilisation' and between 'stability' and 'peace' are much less clear.

This explains why non-governmental actors often perceive stabilisation as being a top-down approach, focusing on the state and undertaken by hard security actors. There are also concerns about the tensions between building short-term stability and building long-term peace. European countries tend increasingly to prioritise national security (and migration) interests, at times at the expense of the security of local communities based on a people-centred peacebuilding approach, which is seen to be more niche, high-risk

<sup>5</sup> Despite the terminology of peacebuilding having been used in policy commitments for over 25 years, conceptual confusion persists – including within donor communities that are more familiar with the term (see Sherriff et al. 2018)

<sup>6</sup> Somalia was one of the eight cases of current or past US engagements in conflict-affected areas analysed, together with Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Libya, Mali, Nigeria and Pakistan.

<sup>7</sup> The UK government's approach to stabilisation, updated by the Stabilisation Unit in 2014, drew on evidence and lessons learned from experience in a range of situations over the past ten years, including Somalia.

or experimental (Sherriff et al. 2018). Within this narrative, concepts like 'stabilisation' have become more politically appealing as they have more traction across different government departments (including ministries of defence) than 'peacebuilding'. This has driven concerns about the securitisation or even militarisation of aid. The confusion between these objectives, which are highly political in nature, and peacebuilding, and the fact that humanitarians, by culture, tend to avoid the state and focus on the needs of people, may explain why collaboration between peacebuilding, humanitarian and development actors can be challenging in practice.

In post-warlord Somalia, state formation is highly influenced by external actors. Regional actors and the international community rallied behind contenders who they thought would promote their interests. Since the establishment of the Somalia Transitional Government in 2004, and particularly since the formalisation of the Somalia Federal Government, the terms 'stabilisation', 'statebuilding' and 'peacebuilding' have been used by the UN and donors as interchangeable or highly interdependent terms. From the onset, security was prioritised as both a primary objective and a critical condition for building a state apparatus in Somalia. In addition to AMISOM's (African Union Mission in Somalia) enforcement capabilities, the idea was also mooted of funding 'quick impact projects' that would accompany AMISOM's 'stabilisation' efforts. The aim was to extend the 'peace dividend' to people living in newly liberated areas,<sup>8</sup> to legitimise the federal government and to cement state presence and public services.

The statebuilding agenda also overlapped with the 'Global War on Terror' and the counter-terrorism campaign, particularly in the wake of the rise of the Islamic Courts Union and Ethiopia's subsequent military intervention in 2007. The fixation on the 'elimination' of Al-Shabaab post-2007 meant that international statebuilding support favoured those interventions that promised to keep Al-Shabaab in check rather than those that could legitimately govern or build consensus among the different armed groups (Crouch 2018). In some ways, this engendered the illusion that Al-Shabaab was the only or the main obstruction to peace in Somalia and that its defeat would be the fulcrum of successful statehood in Somalia. The reality was far more complex and the conflict far more multifaceted. Counter-terrorism measures, including the US Patriot Act<sup>9</sup> adopted in 2001, have also had direct and sometimes legal bearing on peacebuilding practitioners, by limiting how and with whom peacebuilding organisations can engage for conflict transformation.

While there may be a growing receptivity to peacebuilding in Somalia (through funding, political will and frameworks), the term means different things to different actors. The current discourse on 'peacebuilding' in Somalia by the UN and donor community gravitates towards hard security provision, assistance to the federal government, and reconciliation at the highest level. Bottom-up peacebuilding practitioners, who focus more on transforming social relationships and less on sustaining state security, often see these activities as extensions of 'stabilisation' and not as 'peacebuilding'. Their concern is that the concept of peacebuilding may have been instrumentalised to 'whitewash' what is an otherwise political statebuilding project in Somalia. They therefore see a risk to their impartiality, if they are to completely embrace a nexus narrative.

At the same time, the bottom-up peacebuilding practitioners interviewed for this study did not reject the approach as a matter of principle. Rather, they questioned how it should be interpreted and what their role as peacebuilders should be. Some saw value and also engaged in light coordination and exchange with

<sup>8</sup> See Lotze W. and Williams P. 2016; Suri S. 2016; Skepstrom E. and Nordund P. 2014.

<sup>9</sup> The US Patriot Act came into force in 2001 as part of the 'Global War on Terror' campaign. The Act criminalises any 'material support' to terrorist organisations. While the meaning of the term 'material support' was ambiguous, it included providing 'training' and 'advice' with no distinction as regards intent (i.e. to aid their cause vs. for peacebuilding purposes). For more on this, see 3P Human Security, 2011.



development actors on conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity. Development actors in turn often find themselves engaging in local conflict resolution before they can start implementing projects. The peacebuilding community nonetheless found the idea of following AMISOM or government forces in newly liberated areas, to help build trust between government actors or police and local communities, far too political and partial a process for them to engage in.<sup>10</sup> They preferred instead to do such trust-building exercises with whoever was perceived as being an important player (including non-state actors) and wherever they saw the need, rather than being dictated by funding flows or government presence.

Dedicated funding streams for peacebuilding tend to be considerably smaller and more *ad hoc* than established systems of humanitarian and development funding. In many institutional contexts, peacebuilding is also less established as a separate policy domain in its own right, but often viewed through either a development or a foreign/security policy lens. Higher-level decision-makers do not always see peacebuilding as separate from development, despite the fact that peacebuilding has its own ‘community’ (Sherriff et al. 2018). In the interviews conducted for this study on the meaning and state of the nexus in Somalia, peacebuilding was strikingly absent as a long-term, human relational and non-security and state-centric process. In the context of Somalia, it seems that ‘governance’ and ‘statebuilding’ have overshadowed peacebuilding in the triple nexus and that, by focusing on building a functional state, international interventions overlook people-centred, bottom-up peacebuilding approaches. These are seen to be more niche or experimental activities carried out by a separate community of actors. Our interviewees also pointed to the fact that the discourse on governance and statebuilding rarely helped to transform resource-based clan conflicts at a local level, which directly exacerbate the instability – and by association the acute humanitarian need – that is pervasive in rural Somalia.

Overall, words and concepts such as ‘peacebuilding’, ‘reconciliation’, ‘resilience’, ‘governance’ and ‘stabilisation’ have been bandied about at different times, with varying levels of popularity and usage. The proliferation of such terms follows a natural trend in the development of concepts that provide different analytical lenses to deal with the same complexity. At the same time, the multiplicity and conflation of these interlinking concepts has created confusion among practitioners, to a point where two organisations could be designing or implementing completely different and even divergent interventions under the same name (such as ‘resilience’, ‘peacebuilding’ or ‘stabilisation’). The fact that funding is often attached to ‘the label of the day’ and the wording (but not always the format) of interventions has to be fashioned accordingly, is another factor reinforcing this trend.

That said, the way the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus is and can be operationalised depends very much on the country context (PHAP 2018). The following sections focus on the Somali context, the different coordination systems and structures, and the opportunities and enablers for enhancing coordinated action in protracted crisis situations.

## 2. Statebuilding, foreign aid and the Somali political settlement

Over the past ten years, Somalia has seen a steady improvement in the security situation. This has been thanks mainly to the advances made by the regional military force, AMISOM, against Al-Shabaab. In parallel with this, the country has come a long way from little or no state authority in the mid-2000s to a second federal government, which took office in 2017. While violence appears to have declined – at least

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<sup>10</sup> This is the case, for example, with whole-of-government approaches and initiatives such as CRESTA/A (see below).



in the capital, Mogadishu – the country remains highly insecure, with regular clashes and continuing political tensions and terrorist attacks.

In other words, the relative stability in Somalia should not be mistaken for peace. The power-sharing agreement produced under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the international community has led to a peaceful transition of power between successive transitional and federal governments. Yet the country remains far from reaching a consensus on the type of federalism that is fit for its current reality. Nor are the basic state structures, including a unified and reliable security force, in place.

The Somali political settlement<sup>11</sup> cannot be disconnected from the security situation. The Somali National Reconciliation Conference (Mbagathi process) adopted a '4.5 power-sharing formula', which gives full representation to the four main clans and half a representation to a collection of minority clans. The 4.5 formula was the basis on which clan leaders populated the Somali parliament, which ultimately instated the Somali Transitional Government. Consecutive transitional and federal governments led to the gradual 'institutionalisation' of this elite bargain as political elites saw considerable gains and new opportunities in renewed stability. The formula remained the underlying principle in the latest round of elections, which took place in 2016.<sup>12</sup>

The survival of this elite bargain is also intricately linked to the rise of Al-Shabaab in late 2006 (Menkhaus, 2018). Al-Shabaab was a threat to the entire political class in Somalia, and therefore transcends clan differences and territorial disputes that would hitherto have led to immediate clashes. The presence of a common enemy, combined with massive external financing, was a strong enough incentive to keep the federalisation process on course. It also led to a situation in which, according to Ken Menkhaus, *'the US and its allies securitised statebuilding in Somalia; and the Somali elites commoditised Western counter-terrorism fears'* (2018: 20).

One of the premises of the Somali security agenda is a gradual expansion of the control exerted by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) through the stabilisation of 'newly accessible areas' with district-level caretaker administrations to pave the way for full stabilisation and the establishment of (interim) local administrations (Hammond 2016: 17). In reality, further expansion and stabilisation has slowed down significantly in recent years. AMISOM pushed Al-Shabaab out of most of Mogadishu in the years preceding the 2012 handover to the FGS. Since 2015, however, new military advances have been limited.

In terms of the governance agenda, progress has also stalled in recent years. The finalisation of the constitution has repeatedly been delayed, and the objective of universal elections has been pushed forward with every transfer of power. The ambition remains, but the security situation continues to be inadequate. Moreover, the FGS's territorial control is limited, as is its authority over the regional states that constitute it. Relations between the FGS and the federal member states (FMS) are based not on subsidiarity, but on continuous negotiation between the leaders at both levels, not least through the National Security Council (NSC). The NSC brings together the head of state of the FGS and the presidents of each of the FMS, essentially the leadership of the main clans, and is the locus of all major decisions on

<sup>11</sup> We use a broad definition of the term 'political settlement' as 'the formal and informal processes, agreements, and practices that help consolidate politics, rather than violence, as a means for dealing with disagreements about interests, ideas and the distribution and use of power' (Laws and Leftwich, 2014: 1).

<sup>12</sup> As the plans for universal suffrage proved impracticable at the time, the same 4.5 formula was used to appoint over 13,000 electoral college delegates. These delegates were selected by their clan elders to elect the 275 members of the lower house, where each of the four major clans has an equal share of the seats, while minority clans have been allotted half the number of seats (Menkhaus 2018: 23).

the federalisation process, including the complex format of indirect elections and the progress on the constitution. As such, it embodies the durability of the Somali elite bargain. Some progress has been made in recent months with the recently established Federalisation Negotiation Technical Committee (FNTC). The FNTC acts as a platform driving negotiations among the FMS, and building consensus ahead of the formal political process (UN Security Council 2018).

## 2.1. Foreign aid as a condition for stability

External interventions are so interwoven with the Somali statebuilding process that the international community is a critical component of the political settlement. Outside pressure and funding have been critical every step of the way, and any significant alteration of course could risk the rapid destabilisation of this fragile political settlement.

While the Somali constitutional and electoral systems are designed to be a stepping stone towards the establishment of a liberal democratic federal state and universal elections, Somalia's seemingly 'endless state of transition' (Lesage 2010) has become a critical pillar of stability. Although, for example, the 4.5 power-sharing formula is set to be abandoned in the 2020 elections, it remains unclear whether this would be feasible. From an external viewpoint, this formula is seen as a form of conflict prevention, providing an opening towards a unity government and universal elections. From the viewpoint of the Somali elite, on the other hand, it guarantees that the leadership of each clan will have a reserved number of seats at the table in a new Somali state.

Over the years, foreign aid has become a critical condition for the survival and renegotiation of the Somali elite bargain. This is implicitly recognised by most (Western) donors who are active in the country. First, the sustained influx of foreign aid (both Western and non-Western) has significantly increased the rents over which political elites negotiate. Access to the pie provides an incentive for clan elites to continue to support the federalisation agenda. Second, aid and continued foreign support is conditional on those same elites avoiding large-scale political violence as a means of securing elite positions (Menkhaus 2018: 3). Similarly, foreign support for AMISOM safeguards the FGS's hold on power and its claim to Mogadishu.<sup>13</sup> The withdrawal of AMISOM in the coming years would likely place an immense strain on the Somalia National Security Forces (SNSF) and risk the creation of a security vacuum which would rapidly be filled by clan militias and Al-Shabaab (Menkhaus 2018: 24-25).

The donor community therefore has no other option than to move forward on its current path. Most of Somalia's Western donor support is unambiguous, with statebuilding being the explicit primary objective. This also informs the decision to increase support channelled through the national aid architecture (see section 3.1) and progressively increase aid channelled through country systems. In July 2018, for example, the EU pledged to provide EUR 100 million in budget support as a statebuilding and resilience contract, just days after the World Bank had committed USD 80 million in International Development Association (IDA) financing.

**These choices also reflect a strong sense within the donor community that it is now or never for Somali statebuilding and stabilisation.** The current situation is indeed the closest to a functional state Somalia has been in decades. Failure of the federal model is not seen as an option. According to some interviewees, this sometimes inspires overly expedient policy-making and a very high tolerance of pervasive political corruption and rent-seeking behaviour by Somali political elites, as well as regional and

<sup>13</sup> The EU has been AMISOM's largest donor (by far) since 2007. At the peak in 2015, it contributed over EUR 20 million per month (Mahmood & Ani 2017: 5). Other donors include the UN (UNSOS), the UK and the US.

international actors with strong interests in Somalia. At the very least, it illustrates that one cannot look at humanitarian aid and peacebuilding as a merely technical issue, and that each choice is made in a context in which donor support is part and parcel of political stability and security.

## 2.2. Humanitarian aid in a complex political emergency

The words 'protracted crisis' are to some extent an oxymoron (DuBois 2018: 8). Somalia is a good example of a country in which a state of crisis has become the norm. Humanitarian aid is part of the day-to-day reality in much of the country, and OCHA estimates that 4.2 million people will need assistance in 2019 (OCHA November 2018). This represents 34% of the total Somali population. UNHCR also estimates that more than 800,000 Somalis live in refugee camps in the region (UNHCR December 2018), and that 2.6 million people have been internally displaced (UNHCR October 2018). In refugee and IDP (internally displaced persons) camps, a variety of humanitarian actors provide most, if not all, basic services. At times, humanitarian agencies have better access to basic population data than the Somali state, thanks to their Social Safety Net Programmes, which provide long-term support to vulnerable populations. In doing so, humanitarian agencies play a critical role in the governance of many parts of the country.

In the absence of sufficient state governance in complex political emergencies, the mandate of humanitarian and relief agencies has expanded to include recovery and the delivery of basic services such as long-term healthcare, nutrition and education, food assistance, livelihood support and social protection (Bennet 2016: 35). In the context of Somalia, this not only puts significant pressure on humanitarian funding, it also means that humanitarian aid has become an essential part of the service delivery model. Humanitarian agencies have a deep understanding of the Somali crisis and networks of humanitarian providers are deeply rooted in local Somali society. As relative stability and security remains, this also means that there may be a need to challenge the stickiness of the emergency relief paradigm, and the extent to which it should continue to apply to Somalia.

The international community's explicit statebuilding agenda and the embeddedness of humanitarian assistance also mean that the perception of independence, impartiality and neutrality is at times difficult to uphold. Somalia is a country where authority is contested, with a variety of armed groups and with an active insurgency targeting both national and foreign actors. The UN and Western donors unambiguously support the FGS and finance the regional peacekeeping operation that secures it. While humanitarian principles are very evident in humanitarian narratives, there is also a tacit understanding among some practitioners that these principles are of limited usefulness in Somalia, where aid is almost inevitably political.

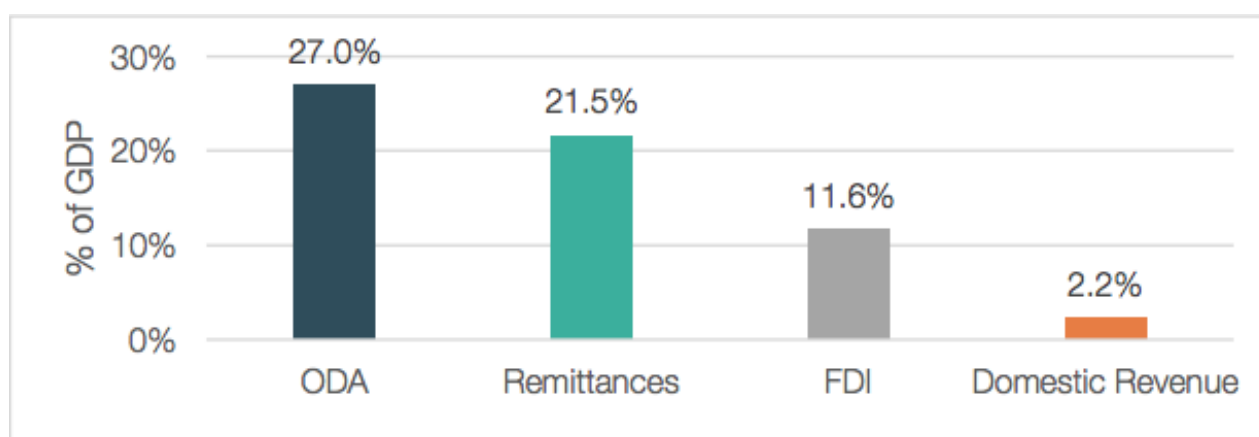
In the case of emergencies such as the 2011 drought, humanitarian access needs to be negotiated. This means that humanitarian agencies and their partners need to engage with all actors to guarantee the timely delivery of assistance. The latter include local elders, armed groups, AMISOM and, in some cases, even Al-Shabaab militants. While dealing with Al-Shabaab is highly contentious in the light of foreign anti-terrorism restrictions, research shows that it has been common practice at certain points to pay off Al-Shabaab-appointed gatekeepers (Jackson and Aynte 2013). Today, AMISOM also plays an increasingly important role in transporting and protecting emergency assistance for UN humanitarian agencies in unsafe locations. This may make it difficult to preserve a semblance of neutrality or independence. In Mogadishu and certain FMS locations, the co-location of military and humanitarian personnel is also a *de facto* reality. Some non-humanitarian interviewees argued that, in such a complex context, an overly principled stance on the part of humanitarian agencies may impede progress, or act as a conceptual straightjacket that unnecessarily restricts the latitude for cooperation and coordination.

In conclusion, foreign assistance in Somalia is part of a fragile equilibrium. It also appears to be approaching a tipping point, with both domestic and foreign actors looking to provide an alternative to the seemingly endless state of crisis and humanitarian dependence. Policy integration and nexus approaches are intended to translate this ambition into operational responses. Changing the approach always carries a risk of upsetting the balance of power between those who benefit from the status quo and those who wish to end it. This applies to the emerging federal systems in Somalia, but is equally relevant to the donor community itself. The following section looks at the structures and actors in place in Somalia today, and the interests and incentives that drive and/or restrict coordinated action in practice.

### 3. Structures and actors of the triple nexus in Somalia

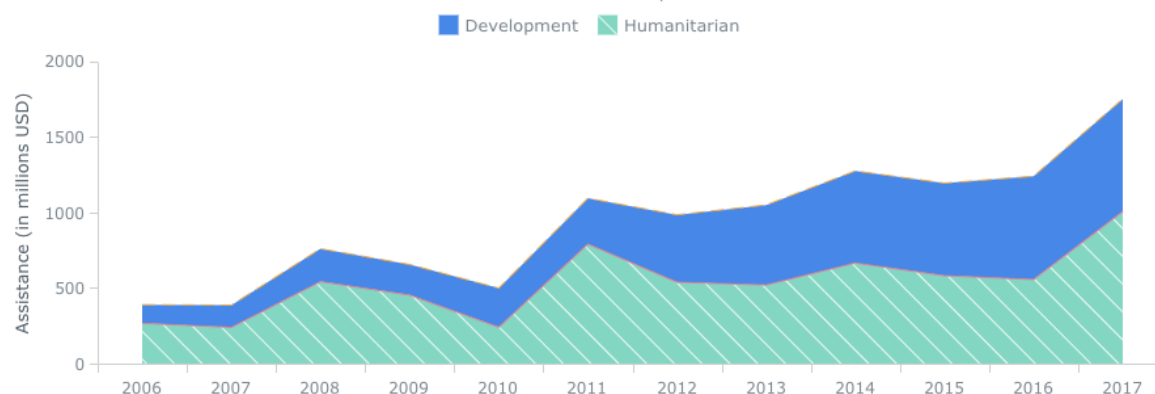
Somalia's aid landscape is a thick maze of bilateral and multilateral support, coupled with a huge variety of non-governmental donors and organisations. The FGS estimates that reported official development assistance (ODA) amounted to 27%<sup>14</sup> of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017, marginally higher than the 21.5% share of GDP accounted for by remittances (MoPIED 2018: 2). Humanitarian aid accounted for almost 60% of reported ODA in 2017. The US, the UK and the EU institutions are by far the biggest donors with a strong humanitarian component in their funding. They are followed by Germany and Sweden, which focus more on development cooperation.

**Figure 2: Financial flows as a percentage of GDP (2017)**



Source: MoPIED 2018

<sup>14</sup> These ODA figures exclude non-OECD donors active in Somalia, including China, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar.

**Figure 3: ODA trends in Somalia (2006-2017)**

Source: MoPIED 2018

The aid and development sector is massive not only in size (totalling USD 1.75 billion in 2016), but also in its geographical coverage (MoPIED 2018; 2). NGOs and the private sector, which are undeniably at the forefront of service provision in Somalia, are visible in many parts of Somalia and directly relevant to the lives of Somalis, even more so than the government (whether regional or federal). Several years of reliance on aid and remittances (the volume of the latter being comparable to that of ODA) has had an impact on society, the NGO sector and donor support to Somalia more broadly. Society is caught up in a cycle of aid-dependency; NGOs and development partners have developed path dependency and donors struggle to imagine Somalia beyond an aid paradigm.

At a more programmatic and operational level, around 20 bilateral donors, 21 UN agencies and programmes, and a handful of development banks are active in the country. As a result, Somalia is also a nightmare in terms of donor coordination. In the absence of a viable state apparatus that can coordinate, guide and regulate the sector, the proliferation of donors and implementing organisations raises questions about the duplication, accountability and effectiveness of aid and development assistance in Somalia.

Over the years, countless structures and mechanisms have been set up to facilitate information exchange and coordination among donors, development actors and humanitarians, and between the authorities and the development, humanitarian, peacebuilding and security communities. These structures by themselves constitute a dense web of working groups, meetings and reporting lines that is well beyond the scope of this study. What we aim to do in this section is to highlight some of the drivers and constraints for cooperation among humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors in Somalia.

### 3.1. The Somali National Development Plan and aid architecture

Following the peaceful transition to a federal government in 2012, the international community launched the €1.8 billion New Deal Compact in 2013. This was intended to provide a strategic framework for the security, political and statebuilding efforts for Somalia for 2014-2016. The Compact sought to align aid with Somalia's national priorities to expedite its recovery in general, and with the five OECD DAC Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) in particular.<sup>15</sup>

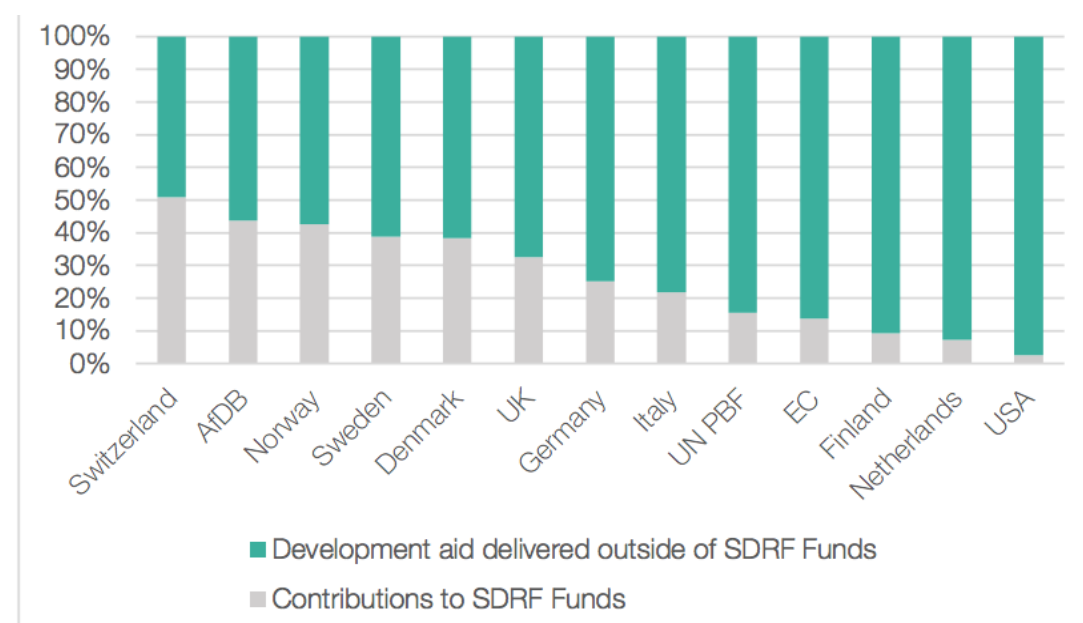
<sup>15</sup> The five goals are: (1) a legitimate and inclusive government; (2) security; (3) justice; (4) economic foundations; and (5) revenue and services (Hearen and Zimmerman, 2014: 3).

Shortly afterwards, in 2014, the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility (SDRF) was established as a mechanism for pulling finances to match the FGS's priorities. Building on the Compact, the FGS issued its first National Development Plan (NDP) in more than 30 years in 2016 (MoPIED, 2016). The SDRF was revised to fit the goals set out in the NDP. The revised SDRF brings together government, UN and bilateral partners in nine thematic pillar working groups coordinating the implementation of the Somali NDP (see figure below). Learning from the experiences of the Compact, which was a trust-building exercise between the FGS and the international community to a greater extent than between the FGS and the FMS, the SDRF includes a National Development Council (NDC) whose task it is to coordinate action between the two levels of government, i.e. the Ministry of Planning, the FMS and the FGS (MoPIED 2017). In terms of objectives, the SDRF is both a coordinating mechanism and a financing architecture. It pulls together three multi-partner funding windows (administered by the UN, the World Bank and the AfDB) with the central aim of providing the FGS with funds for both urgent needs and long-term institutional development (UNDP 2017).<sup>16</sup> Each funding window has a specific purpose. The UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) is a flexible instrument for funding any one of the NDP's pillars. It is executed by government institutions, NGOs, academia and even the private sector as implementing partners of UN agencies. The Multi-Partner Fund (MPF) is designated for core state functions and is largely executed by government entities; some funds are also allocated for World Bank-financed small-scale activities. The AfDB Somali Infrastructure Fund (SIF) is earmarked for long-term development, infrastructure and institutional capacity-building projects. These can be implemented either by the government or by NGOs, private-sector organisations and UN agencies acting with the government's consent. The AfDB could also undertake certain activities at the government's request.

In practice, however, only a small portion of the development aid to Somalia (around 21% of reported aid in 2017) is channelled through the SDRF (MoPIED 2018). The main contributors making maximum use of the SDRF by channelling large volumes of their funds through the SDRF are Switzerland (51%), the AfDB (44%), Norway (39%), Sweden (38%) and the UK (32%) (MoPIED 2018: 13). If contributions to the SDRF are listed in order of magnitude, on the other hand, the European Commission tops the list as the leading contributor, followed by the UK, Sweden, Germany, and Norway (MoPIED 2018: 12). Saudi Arabia and Turkey provided 14% of the direct budget support supplied by Somalia's partners in 2017 (MoPIED 2018: 9).

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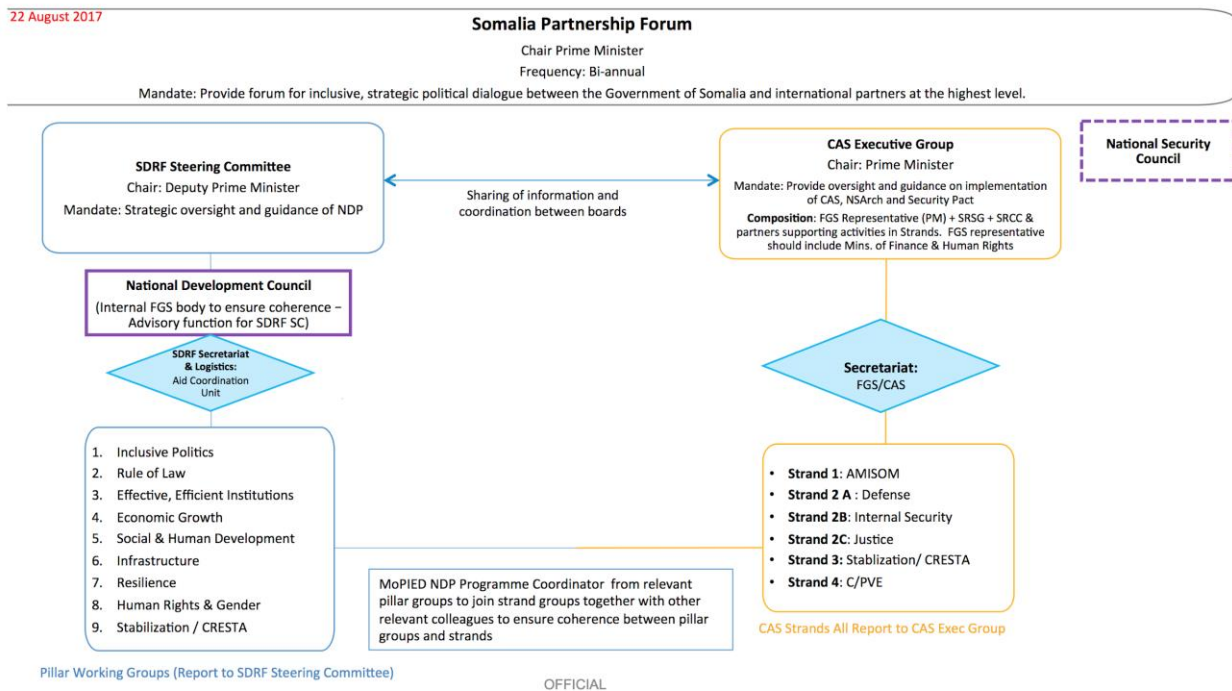
<sup>16</sup> UNDP, 2017. Operations Manual for SDRF Funding Windows.

**Figure 4: Development aid channelled through the SDRF architecture**

Source: MoPIED 2018: 13.

Generally speaking, there is strong support for the NDP among the donor community. It is seen as a major step forward from the New Deal Compact for Somalia. The NDP's resilience pillar in particular, which emphasises matching short-term needs with building long-term capabilities, is seen to offer opportunities for breaking through the dominant short-term, emergency response and 'humanitarian mindset' of the donor community (see section 4 below). The objective of the pillar working groups is to strengthen the FGS's role as a governing authority and to provide a strategic platform for the donor community and various implementing agencies to coordinate their actions under the leadership of the federal government. Yet the compact between the FGS and the FMS is still fragile and the NDP is still very far from forming an all-encompassing aid architecture under the strategic leadership of the FGS. The resonance of the SDRF weakens as one goes further away from Mogadishu (despite the presence of the FMS representatives), and the FMS have very little oversight and coordinating roles at regional and local levels.





Source: MoPIED 2017: 4

### 3.2. The UN and the challenges of inter-agency coordination

The UN is part and parcel of the stabilisation and statebuilding process in Somalia. In fact, the UN first got involved at the height of the civil war in the early 1990s, when fighting was still going on (Philipp 2005), since when it has had a continuous presence in Somalia. Today, the UN is represented in Somalia by a complex structure including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the various UN agencies working in Somalia. The UNSOM was established on 3 June 2013 under UN Security Council Resolution 2102 and is mandated to engage with the government and AMISOM (the African Union peacekeeping operation) on all matters relating to security sector reform, peacebuilding and statebuilding, governance, federal systems and constitutional reform.

The UNSOM mission is based in Mogadishu and operates under the command of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Somalia. The SRSG is supported by two deputies (DSRSG), one of whom is in charge of political affairs and security-related issues. The other DSRSG is in charge of strategic planning across the UN system, combining the DSRSG title with the role of UN Resident Coordinator (RC) and Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). The idea behind centralising these roles is to ensure coherence within the UN family and to give a face to the New Way of Working agenda.

While this would appear to be an ideal means of advancing integrated action within the UN system, in practice the UN mission does not have absolute control over the different agencies that operate in Somalia. Although it can suggest, promote and pilot initiatives, UN agencies tend to work independently of one another. The biggest humanitarian and development agencies, i.e. the WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, etc., also secure a large part of their own funding for working in Somalia, and while joint programmes are common, so is inter-agency competition over resources, partners and areas of work.

Coordination within the UN is divided over two platforms:



1. the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) comprises OCHA and other UN agencies, as well as international and local NGOs, the Somalia NGO consortium and the OIC. The HCT is an authoritative platform chaired by the DSRSG/RC/HC which manages the planning of humanitarian operations in the country.
2. the UN Country Team (UNCT) in turn consists of the 21 UN agencies, funds, programmes and organisations operating in Somalia and is also chaired by the DSRSG, this time acting in his role as Resident Coordinator. The UNCT brings together all (humanitarian and other) agencies and programmes around a joint UN approach to the country in which they work. It does not include NGOs.

The private sector, diaspora initiatives and charities such as Islamic charities are absent from these structures.

While coordination meetings can be crucial, in-country information exchange cannot alter the often fragmented way in which UN agencies operate. The UNCT, for example, could commit to putting the New Way of Working into practice with a radical shift to cross-agency cooperation. However, it does not also have the power to allocate or reallocate agency funding in order to bring this about. While the New Way of Working seems to have been adopted at a policy level, in practice, organisational incentives often point in the opposite direction. There is far less evidence to suggest that the UN is actually succeeding in achieving joint programming across its agencies, although several UN agencies including the UNDP are aware of the need to do so. The organisational systems also allow for joint programmes, provided funding is available. What seems to be gaining traction and to offer promise for the future is cross-agency collaboration at activity level, on a needs basis and without any predefined programmatic ties.

Path dependency, especially in the UN's humanitarian agencies, is a further barrier to closer cooperation. Since 1991, UN agencies and partners have developed emergency response systems that have gradually evolved into fully-fledged service delivery operations, and today increasingly into social safety nets and cash transfer programmes. These operations have saved countless lives and improved the well-being of millions of Somalis over many years. They have also created a situation in which humanitarian agencies, their partners and providers are deeply invested in the Somali state of fragility in a way that is difficult to turn back. The operating model of UN humanitarian agencies is also based on delivering assistance and relief at scale and as swiftly and efficiently as possible. This does not favour cooperation with development and/or peacebuilding actors, which inevitably involves making deals with multiple stakeholders in a complex and political environment.

At the same time, the UN system can also be a driver for innovation. The CRESTA/A framework for civilian and bottom-up stabilisation (discussed below), for example, has generally produced interesting results by linking recovery and reconciliation efforts in a dynamic and fundamentally multi-stakeholder approach. These initiatives benefit greatly from the UN's unique reach beyond the capital city and offer fundable solutions that can be scaled up as and when this is permitted by the security situation.

On a global and organisational level, the NWoW is a partial solution at best. In the absence of any real organisational grounding, it also risks remaining a largely aspirational process. At country level, however, the conversation within the UN system is deepening in line with the growing awareness of the changing political environment. The gradual opening up of the FMS and local authorities forms an opportunity to take the conversation away from a principled debate in New York and Mogadishu, and instead to look at concrete opportunities for cooperation as new issues arise in the regions.

### 3.3. The NGO community

The NGO community, together with the private sector (in all its diversity) and clan structures, are among the primary service-providers in Somalia. With ample foreign and Somali (i.e. diaspora) support, non-state actors have held society together since 1991 and have stayed put as different governing authorities have come and gone (or have failed to appear at all). Of course, this does not mean that the NGO community has always been apolitical or impartial. Over the years, the community has managed to navigate the intricate web of state and non-state authorities to provide services. It continues to do so even now that a form of a state apparatus has been put in place in Somalia.

In a way, its presence and ability to provide services has given the NGO community an advantage over the government in terms of familiarity, relevance and value addition. To a certain extent, this has fuelled tensions between NGOs and the government, as it raises questions about the government's sovereignty (McDowell 2016). On the one hand, a stronger Somali state capable of providing the stability and safety necessary for operation adds value to the work performed by the NGO community. On the other hand, a stronger government could also mean greater control over what NGOs do and where and how they do it.

When it comes to horizontal coordination among NGOs, donors are pushing for structuration (in the form of humanitarian clusters, for example) and stronger accountability. Coordination across sectors – humanitarian, development and peacebuilding – is still limited, however. NGOs tend to see the divisions between sectors as resulting from established funding structures and the *modus operandi* of the aid industry, and as running contrary to the actual needs of beneficiaries, whose needs for humanitarian, development and peace and security services are interlinked. While NGOs blame narrow funding windows as obstacles to integrated cross-sectoral programming, donors refute this and blame NGOs for lacking the creativity and incentives needed to design cross-sectoral programmes that transcend their specific specialist fields.

More informally, both donors and implementers acknowledge that practical realities such as retaining organisational specialisation (even narrowly at sub-sectoral and thematic levels), funding windows, fund-raising and reporting time frames, as well as recurring micro- and macro-crises in Somalia, have created an environment that is not conducive to cross-sectoral coordination and joint programming. Much like the UN system, the NGO community in Somalia is often weighed down by path dependency, which incentivises technical specialisation in the delivery of humanitarian aid rather than learning and innovation.

The Somalia NGO consortium (a platform organisation) appears to play a critical role in promoting peer learning and innovation among its members. As the NGO sector continues to learn and evolve in response to demands from donors and beneficiaries, it is also adopting innovations such as 'crisis modifiers' (see section 4.3) and resilience programming to deal with suddenly changing conditions and longer-term planning, particularly in relation to drought and food security. Donors are also pushing for consortium approaches that transcend sectoral divisions.

**'Peacebuilding' may well be the weakest leg in the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus in Somalia.** While security and stabilisation are necessary conditions and are viewed as priorities in Somalia, peacebuilding, as a socially oriented, bottom-up and relational praxis, features much less prominently. The peacebuilding community is critical of the wider coordination agenda (as indeed are some humanitarian organisations). Bottom-up peacebuilding practitioners point out how peacebuilding is increasingly conflated with security in Somalia and how donors' attachment to the statebuilding agenda tends to overlook local clan-based resource conflicts (over land and water, for example). Local competition

for scarce resources often has a direct impact on humanitarian and development challenges in Somalia. These issues are not always well captured in the statebuilding discourse, however.

That said, there is diversity in how peacebuilding organisations choose to work in the context of Somalia. They often coordinate with and sometimes even have to involve local authorities – in varying forms and degrees – in order to implement their projects. For some, it is important not to engage with local authorities except for registration purposes and to get approval for projects. Others see a role in improving state-society relations, such as building trust between police and young people, even if such interventions are limited to the local level.

Our discussions with NGOs taught us that, with a few exceptions, the nexus imperative is broadly accepted by both development and humanitarian NGOs. Peacebuilding organisations, on the other hand, see value in working or even partnering with humanitarian and development NGOs on a case-by-case or short- to medium-term basis, but not necessarily in integrating these components into their work. By contrast, most NGOs – even the non-peacebuilding ones – often find themselves having to engage in local mediation and conflict resolution in order to operate. This sometimes creates a partnership opportunity with a peacebuilding organisation that can help to develop capacity in this field. However, there is both a reluctance to engage and a lack of experience on both sides. Another area of engagement between peacebuilding organisations and humanitarian/development actors is conflict sensitivity and ‘do no harm’, in relation to which peacebuilding organisations provide conflict analysis or advise on conflict-sensitive programming.

### 3.4. The role of non-traditional and faith-based donors

Non-traditional donors (i.e. the Gulf states, Turkey and non-state donors such as Islamic Relief) have a large footprint in Somalia. While the broader conversation on the nexus approach and coordination often references the usual Western donors and traditional agencies (the UN or INGOs), little is known about the role played by non-traditional donors, and how they relate to traditional donors and aid or development frameworks.

In the case of Somalia, both Turkey and the Gulf states play prominent roles (as do the traditional Western donors), not only in humanitarian aid and development cooperation, but also in the wider political economy dynamics of Somalia. It would be beyond the scope of this study to analyse what sets non-traditional Islamic donors and NGOs apart from their Western counterparts. However, based on interviews conducted in Nairobi and Mogadishu, we can identify two ways in which non-traditional Islamic actors differ from traditional Western donors in the context of the nexus.

#### 3.4.1. Access

Access to target communities in Somalia has always been difficult and often needs to be negotiated with whoever happens to be the governing authority in a given area. Access has become even more difficult since 2009, when Al-Shabaab expelled several Western NGOs from the areas under its control, accusing them of ‘espionage’ on behalf of the governments that fund them, ‘misconduct’ and ‘illicit activities’ (Jackson 2017). The group imposed a list of tough demands, levied ‘taxes’ on humanitarian organisations and harassed their staff, forcing others such as the WFP to withdraw from certain areas in 2011 (Boras 2013). At the height of the famine in 2011, Western donors and NGOs found themselves in a moral dilemma in which they had either to access Al-Shabaab-controlled areas by any means possible or to not respond to the needs of populations living in Al-Shabaab-controlled areas in south central Somalia. Though not guaranteed free access, Islamic organisations were less strictly scrutinised than Western-funded

NGOs. During the 2011 famine, the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) played an instrumental role in pulling Islamic funds and distributing relief in Al-Shabaab-controlled areas (which were inaccessible to most of the traditional relief agencies) by working with national Somali partners and networks that negotiated access to these territories (Svoboda 2016). Turkey and Saudi Arabia also supplied bilateral aid in response to the famine (WFP 2011).

In general, the perception is that Islamic organisations are more inclined to negotiate with factions of Al-Shabaab either directly or through their local partners than Western NGOs. Nonetheless, some Western NGOs also admit informally that engagement or non-engagement with Al-Shabaab and other non-governmental forces is not as clear-cut as it seems in official communications, due to the risk of anti-terrorism restrictions being imposed on Western organisations, such as the 2001 US Patriot Act (see section 1.2).

### 3.4.2. Approach

At an operational level, the Western and national NGOs and donors whom we interviewed for this study said that Islamic donors and humanitarian/development organisations do not attend or only very rarely attend donor coordination meetings and humanitarian cluster meetings. There were a few exceptions to this rule, such as the OIC, which actively participates in donor coordination meetings. Most Islamic donors seem to want to distance themselves from the traditional donors and NGOs, both physically and symbolically. The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) and the OIC, for example, are based not in the Mogadishu International Airport (MIA) compound, but in the city centre of Mogadishu. The Turks in particular see the seclusion of relief workers as a trigger for mistrust between relief agencies and the people they serve (Achilles et al. 2015). While this could be viewed as a distinct approach, it could also be interpreted as aid diplomacy and a run for visibility.

Non-traditional Islamic donor support is difficult to categorise in the context of a humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus. The Gulf states prefer to use their own channels to fund humanitarian and development services and it is not easy to track how each one goes about it. Within the OIC (one of the most prominent Islamic humanitarian actors in Somalia), the lines between relief, long-term development and post-conflict recovery are not as clear as is the case with Western donors. Many of the OIC's interventions simultaneously address humanitarian and development needs (Svoboda 2016). However, this does not automatically mean that the OIC adopts a nexus approach to Somalia. It simply does not make the same procedural distinction between different strands of charitable funding as do the members of the OECD.<sup>17</sup>

As donors, the Gulf states and Turkey seem to take a pragmatic, demand-driven, direct/bilateral approach. They tend to provide direct support to government actors at both federal and member state levels, and communicate very little about their support. This creates a peculiar situation in which the FGS reports in increasing detail on incoming aid flows, but does not include any data from its 'non-reporting donors'.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, the FGS's 2018 report (MoPIED) stated that Turkey and Saudi Arabia contributed close to USD 30 million each. This is almost two-thirds of the aid (USD 100 million) delivered through the treasury in 2017 (MoPIED 2018).

To a certain extent, the OIC creates a link between the non-Western donor community and the established donor coordination mechanisms. The OIC is an intergovernmental organisation that implements projects

<sup>17</sup> For more information on the OIC as a humanitarian player, see Svoboda E. et al., 2015.

<sup>18</sup> The non-reporting donors listed in the FGS's March 2018 Aid flow mapping are: the Arab League, China, France, the Islamic Development Bank, Japan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey.

and programmes in Somalia. It is part of the HCT (for disaster response) and the Informal Humanitarian Donor Group. Its members, such as Turkey, Qatar and the UAE, have bilateral engagements in addition to the finances they channel through the OIC.

Of late, the competition for influence among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Turkey following the Gulf crisis has exposed the pragmatic nature of Gulf engagement in Somalia. The big power players on opposite sides of the Gulf Crisis (Qatar and, by association, Turkey on the one side and Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the other) ostentatiously flaunted their aid (in cash or in kind), and infrastructure investment deals, so as to reward alliances between and among the FGS and the FMS and beat their opponents' offers. This situation made headlines in June 2018, when the FGS confiscated millions of dollars (in cash) from an Emirati airplane (Malley 2018). Somali actors were by no means bystanders in this.<sup>19</sup> Those FMS with pre-existing grievances towards the FGS played along to strengthen their hold on the FGS and push their own regional interests. This threatens the federalisation process in Somalia and has widened the gap between the FGS and the FMS, Somaliland and Puntland in particular (ICG 2018).

But the spill-over effect of the Gulf crisis goes beyond politics and the Somali federal arrangement. It has also influenced aid and development service delivery levels as it has reached a point where some GCC donors and the NGOs they support do not provide humanitarian and development support to regions (FMS) outside their influence. FMS sometimes reject aid provided by a competing GCC state and prevent it from being distributed in their territories.

Recognition is gradually growing of the increasingly important role played by non-traditional donors in Somalia. As it does, so the body of literature on their impact on the political economy of the statebuilding project is also growing. However, the ongoing debate on the changing nature of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming or praxis, and the approaches that have subsequently emerged (i.e. coordination, integrated approaches and territorial approaches), do not take full account of the practices and experiences of non-traditional donors. Non-traditional actors are fast becoming eminent actors in all sorts of issues and at all sorts of levels.

Going forward, the various conceptual and programmatic innovations affecting the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding (HDP) nexus cannot afford to overlook non-traditional actors if they are to succeed. For this reason, governance programmes (in terms of both design and implementation), territorial approaches, and the trend towards closer coordination should, at the least, analyse and factor in the role of non-traditional actors.

In conclusion, it is not easy to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding in a complex and fragile governance environment like Somalia. This section shows that the interests and incentives of most nexus actors tend to point in different directions. Although the governance situation offers new opportunities, given the high risk of engagement, new forms of engagement are slow to get off the ground and tend to be the exception rather than the norm. While coordination with the FGS and information-sharing has improved dramatically over the years, this is still very much a work in progress. Aid flows from outside the OECD are also very much a blind spot, especially at sub-national level. The

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<sup>19</sup> While the situation is still unfolding, the dynamics may be summarised as follows (reflecting the status in late 2018): the Gulf crisis led to the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt (a non-GCC member) officially cutting diplomatic and economic ties with Qatar in 2017, accusing it of destabilising the region and interfering in their domestic affairs. President Farmaajo's federal government has enjoyed good relationships with Qatar and Turkey. Somaliland, on the other hand, is currently assessing a potential deal with an Emirati company to build a port in Berbera and therefore has good reason to maintain ties with the UAE. Mogadishu believes that the UAE's interaction with Somaliland (formally an FMS, although it has declared itself an independent state) will deepen tensions between the federal government and Somaliland. See ICG, 2018 for more information.

following section looks at a number of innovations and opportunities for joint planning between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding practitioners and makes the link with local governance through area-based approaches.

## 4. Joint planning and coordinated action

Experience shows that innovative approaches, especially those involving local governance actors, are inherently risky. Working directly with local elites and community leaders can also have adverse or perverse side-effects. Donors and implementing agencies therefore often rely on what they know best (specialisation) and what can guarantee their organisational survival. This is especially true in a context where alternative approaches are not easily conceived, due to a simple lack of access, security or sometimes limited knowledge of local power dynamics. Over the past few years, however, the political environment in Somalia has gradually become more favourable to new ways of working. Opportunities are also emerging for improving joint planning and cross-disciplinary action in practice.

### 4.1. Contextual changes

#### ***The effect of prolonged crisis***

Integrated or nexus approaches are motivated partly by donor fatigue in complex emergencies. Cyclical disasters and conflicts remind agencies of the need to deal with root causes instead of concentrating on immediate needs. The 2011 drought in East Africa appears to have been a turning point for external support in Somalia. The resultant famine in southern and central parts of Somalia claimed the lives of an estimated 258,000 people (Seal & Bailey 2013). Although early-warning systems identified the risk of famine, large-scale mortality and displacement could not be avoided.<sup>20</sup>

In the wake of this crisis, several donor agencies and the UN adopted resilience initiatives to tackle long-standing vulnerability in the Horn of Africa. The EU stepped up its efforts through the 'Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience programme' (SHARE), which combined short-term humanitarian assistance with immediate recovery development financing, as well as a longer-term commitment to building resilience (European Commission 2013).<sup>21</sup> The 2013-2015 consolidated appeal process was one of the first multi-year humanitarian planning operations in the world (Brady 2018). In recent years, the federal government has gradually taken on a stronger coordinating role around the NDP, together with its main funding partners, particularly in the area of resilience-building.

#### ***Increasing political space and proximity***

Continued relative political stability in Somalia and the gradual development of a federal government apparatus has significantly increased the proximity between the donor community and its target communities. While access remains a major problem, and most donor agencies rely on third-party monitoring to obtain even the most basic data on programme implementation, the environment is gradually opening up. Following the transition to a federal government in 2012, UNSOM moved back into Mogadishu, and today most major UN agencies have a permanent presence in the Mogadishu International Airport

<sup>20</sup> To this day, the humanitarian response that ensued remains a source of frustration and embarrassment for many in the donor community. Not only was support unable to stave off the crisis, there were major access problems as well as serious reports of aid being diverted.

<sup>21</sup> In 2012, the EU adopted the concept of resilience as a key component of both its humanitarian and its development work. Resilience is now included in all 'Humanitarian Implementation Plans', and is a key priority in development programming in many fragile states.

compound. The EU and bilateral donors also increased their presence in the capital, thus facilitating coordination both with the FGS and within the donor community.

Furthermore, and more importantly, access has also improved at local level due to AMISOM's territorial gains since 2012 and a tentative return to stability in several parts of the country. This allows new approaches to be tested at FMS and even district levels in areas that were hitherto only indirectly accessible or *de facto* restricted to security and humanitarian operations. In recent years, for example, the UN's approach to stabilisation has taken a more civilian, holistic approach with the Community Recovery and Extension of State Authority and Accountability (CRESTA/A). CRESTA/A falls under the Comprehensive Approach to Security framework for coordinating national and international security and stabilisation efforts (unlike the SDRF and the NDP). It seeks to advance stabilisation in four of the FMS,<sup>22</sup> not through military force, but through civilian engagement and by combining local reconciliation with a community approach to peacebuilding and the development of legitimate and accountable local government structures.

CRESTA/A and related programmes seed-funded from the UN Peacebuilding Fund (such as Midnimo and Dhaldis) are an illustration of a new phase of stabilisation and local governance efforts in Somalia that have only recently become possible. Under this approach, humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors in liberated areas coordinate, divide tasks and reinforce each other with the aim of strengthening (existing or newly emerging) local authorities.

## 4.2. Conceptual bridges: resilience and durable solutions for IDPs

### ***Resilience as a programmable concept at household or community level***

Most actors in Somalia see the process of building resilience, i.e. helping beneficiaries to cope with ongoing crisis, while strengthening their ability to withstand similar 'shocks' in the future, as a useful entry point for connecting needs-based humanitarian assistance with longer-term development planning. The NDP has fully adopted the language of resilience, which it presents as a way of moving from a reactive to a proactive approach, and of breaking out of endless cycles of vulnerability and humanitarian crises. The resilience pillar working group of the SDRF (see section 3.1) is also seen by many as a big step forward for the FGS and its emerging role in aid coordination. Acting in partnership with the World Bank, the UN and the EU, the FGS carried out a Drought Impact and Needs Assessment in 2017, followed by the development of a Recovery and Resilience Framework (RRF). The RRF, which is in line with the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan, seeks to steer resources over a 3-5 year period from early drought recovery to longer-term resilience and disaster preparedness, and reclaim control over the effects of a challenging, yet predictable natural environment.

Donor agencies and the NGO community also tend to see resilience as a workable concept, and most donors have adopted it, both in their strategy documents and in their programming. Notable examples are the Somalia Resilience Programme (SomRep)<sup>23</sup> and the Building Resilient Communities in Somalia Programme (BRCiS),<sup>24</sup> two donor-funded consortia of international NGOs that seek to work in a more flexible and adaptive way to ensure that humanitarian and more long-term development efforts can build

<sup>22</sup> CRESTA/A is in force in the Jubaland, South West, Galmudug and Hirshabelle states.

<sup>23</sup> SomRep is a consortium of seven international NGOs funded by the EU, Swiss Cooperation, USAID, SIDA (the Swedish international development cooperation agency), the Australian government, DANIDA (Danish development cooperation) and the UK Disasters Emergency Committee. SomRep works to enhance the resilience of chronically vulnerable households, communities and systems across Somalia.

<sup>24</sup> BRCiS is a humanitarian consortium of five international NGOs funded by DFID and the EU that helps Somali communities to develop their capacity to resist and absorb minor shocks without undermining their ability to move out of poverty.



more resilient local communities. Even within the UN system, agencies are able to cooperate around the resilience agenda. As early as in 2012, for example, the WFP, FAO and UNICEF launched a joint resilience strategy and programme, focusing on community-level planning, food aid and production capacity with a minimum time frame of several years. More recently, the same coalition launched its Joint Resilience Action (2018-2022), a multi-sector programme that brings together humanitarian aid, food and nutritional security, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and education.

In other words, resilience provides a useful narrative and objective that both the humanitarian and development community can get behind. In the area of drought response and food security, it also offers a suite of concrete implementation options at community level. Peacebuilding organisations also programme around the concept of resilience. This means not only dealing with ongoing conflicts, but also building up mechanisms and relationships that can help peacefully manage future conflicts. Some peacebuilding organisations in Somalia, for example, work with inter-clan platforms that help build relationships across clans and can be used to resolve clan-based local conflicts. Similarly, there are projects at the intersection of peacebuilding and local governance that seek to build trust between young people (especially men, who are often perceived as being susceptible to crime and violence, including joining non-state armed groups) and local authorities such as the police, in areas where there is a lack of trust. However, these do not use the terminology of resilience as much as humanitarians and development actors do, and instead frame their work around conflict resolution and long-term, sustainable peacebuilding.

The examples cited above tend to focus on a narrow definition of resilience as the ability of households and individuals to withstand external shocks and pressure. A number of donor agencies, including the EU in its 2017 'Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action' (EC & HRVP 2017) and the Somali NDP, adopt a wider definition of resilience, including economic resilience and state capabilities as critical components of long-term resilience.<sup>25</sup> This is much more difficult to translate into programmed action, and calls for a greater degree of integration that may fall outside the comfort zone of some humanitarian and implementing agencies. At the same time, over-relying on mere household and community resilience can also be seen as setting the bar rather low in terms of what can and should be achieved jointly.

### ***Durable solutions for IDPs and refugees***

The Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan estimates that there are more than one million Somali refugees (most of whom are hosted in the Horn of Africa and Yemen) and 2.6 million IDPs in Somalia (UNHCR October 2018). Every external or internal shock causes fresh displacements and the IDMC estimates that there were 341,000 new displacements in Somalia in 2018 alone (2018).<sup>26</sup> In Somalia, displacement is no longer temporary, but structural. It is also an issue that touches on more than half of the population, either directly (as IDPs) or indirectly (as displacement-affected people).

Since 2015-16, the DSRSG/HC/RC<sup>27</sup> and the government have promoted the durable solutions initiative (DSI) in Somalia in cooperation with UN agencies, the World Bank, and NGO and donor communities. The DSI seeks to provide a collective framework (in line with the NDP) for developing and implementing durable, coordinated solutions to displacement. Durable solutions is in itself merely a concept. Its main appeal lies in the fact that it represents a shift in thinking, from a narrow focus on the return of refugees and IDPs to their integration in their host communities as a long-term 'solution' to displacement. As such, it

<sup>25</sup> For a more in-depth discussion, see Hauck, V. 2017. [Will the new Communication on resilience help to make EU external action more effective? ECDPM Talking Point Blog](#), 17 March 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Many of these were already IDPs living in temporary housing.

<sup>27</sup> Professor Walter Kälin (of the University of Bern) has been the special UN advisor to the DSRSG/HC/RC since 2015, and is the main architect behind the DSI.



offers a lens through which humanitarian, development and public-sector actors can engage in the joint planning and programming of support.

In other words, the DSI is not a programme, but offers a framework for programme design focusing on early solutions and relief, as well as on the facilitation of returns to the place of origin and the integration of IDPs or returnees through community-driven development and resettlement to third countries. Examples of such programmes include the Midnimo (unity) programme in the South West and Jubaland states (UNHABITAT and IOM), which works with local authorities and government departments to cater to the needs and priorities of the entire community in the target districts,<sup>28</sup> and the EU Trust Fund's RE-INTEG programme entitled 'Enhancing Somalia's responsiveness to the management and reintegration of mixed migration flows'.<sup>29</sup>

Although durable solutions (DS) are high on the DSRSG's agenda, and programmes are being developed,<sup>30</sup> some interviewees claimed that there was still a long way to go before the approach attained a critical mass. The migration component was now very much at the forefront of foreign support, but a DS approach was much more difficult to follow than a traditional humanitarian approach. DS look at difficult issues that are often missing in traditional approaches to internal displacement and return from neighbouring countries. This includes sensitive matters such as social and economic rights, property rights and the role of local governance in working with long-term IDPs and returnees.

The adoption of 'integration' as a component of durable solutions may not be in the interests of neighbouring countries, who seek to focus support as much as possible on accelerating either the return or the third-country resettlement of Somali refugees they host. For example, the Kenyan authorities have been planning for many years to close the largest Somali refugee camp in the region, in Dadaab.<sup>31</sup> Kenyan pressure<sup>32</sup> on refugees to apply for voluntary return assisted by UNHCR has induced some 75,000 refugees to return to Somalia, mostly around cities like Kismayo and Mogadishu (NRC 2018). Returnees often end up in IDP camps with little prospects of reintegration in Somalia, and with poorer access to basic services such as education than they had in Kenya (Heritage Institute 2017). Humanitarian agencies in turn are in a difficult position if they facilitate what some observers characterise as the coerced, if not forced, return of a limited number of people. These returns risk further deepening the internal displacement crisis in Somalia, and simply shift humanitarian needs from one location to another.

Conceptual frameworks like resilience and durable solutions provide possible programmatic solutions to protracted crisis dynamics. However, they are not a panacea for joint action and their success depends entirely on the political and organisational environment in which they are applied.

### 4.3. Flexible funding and adaptive programming

The most commonly cited constraint to integrated approaches is that funding flows are fragmented in terms of domains (humanitarian, development and peacebuilding), and funding and programme cycles, i.e.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.uninsomalia.org/pros-cal-success-story-1/2017/12/7/somali-communities-define-their-own-development-priorities-through-the-midnimo-programme>

<sup>29</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/horn-africa/somalia/re-integ-enhancing-somalias-responsiveness-management-and-reintegration\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/horn-africa/somalia/re-integ-enhancing-somalias-responsiveness-management-and-reintegration_en)

<sup>30</sup> Several agencies are recruiting DS advisors to assist with this transition.

<sup>31</sup> In February 2017, the Kenyan High Court blocked the government's decision to close down Dadaab, calling the decision discriminatory and unconstitutional because it had not proven that Somalia was sufficiently safe for the refugees to return.

<sup>32</sup> Some observers have claimed that refugees are not returning voluntarily, but are doing so out of a lack of alternatives and in the wake of threats from the Kenyan authorities (Heritage Institute, 2017).

humanitarian interventions are typically short-term and development programmes are typically long-term (Medinilla et al. 2016). Donors operating at country level tend to perceive the impact of this fragmentation differently from their colleagues in headquarters. How a given donor channels funds to implementers on the ground therefore depends on the formal or informal internal coordination and feedback structures between humanitarian and development task managers.

Donors in Somalia structure their humanitarian and development support in various ways, ranging from full institutional separation (as is the case with the EU, which has a separate mandate and reporting line for the EU Delegation and the ECHO field office)<sup>33</sup> to full integration (as applies to DFID, which makes very little distinction between funding flows for development and humanitarian aid). While the EU actively supports integrated approaches and the resilience agenda at a policy level, this is not clearly reflected by its structures and funding channels, which are geared more to sectoral specificity and (through ECHO) the efficient delivery of humanitarian aid. A number of interviewees claimed that, while far from being a silver bullet, a single-budget model does appear to reduce the transaction costs for the programming of hybrid interventions.

Somalia has also seen a range of programmatic innovations as part of development and humanitarian interventions that seek to increase flexibility and ensure that long-term development interventions are backed by a short-term reactive and adaptive management. The use of crisis modifiers<sup>34</sup> has been cited as a particularly useful approach by both donors and implementing agencies, especially in the context of resilience programmes. The BRCiS consortium, for example, has been able to quickly redirect funds through DFID's Internal Risk Facility (2013-17 humanitarian programme) in order to respond to sudden emergencies such as droughts and flooding both within and outside the programme's target communities (Laguardia & Poole 2016).

Flexible funding allows resources to be redirected in response to changes in the operating environment. Adaptability is also gaining in importance as an approach in donor-funded programmes. High-impact programmes tend to focus on solving local problems and often involve rapid learning cycles and adaptive management rather than an overly fixed calendar of activities.<sup>35</sup> This is an area where development actors could possibly learn from humanitarians by limiting the number of steps and approvals that are required before an operational decision can be implemented.

The Somali Stability Fund (SSF), a multi-donor instrument for local governance support and conflict mitigation launched in 2012, is a well-documented case in this respect. The SSF is designed to respond flexibly and rapidly to needs on the ground and also to take more risks and learn on the go (Laws, 2018, p ii). In order for this to be possible, the programme has been designed with significant built-in decision-making authority, as well as a strong analytical capability and research function to allow for a politically savvy practice. While there is no gold standard for programme design for fragile environments, it is clear that problem-driven and adaptive approaches will be critical in order to grasp local opportunities.

<sup>33</sup> To some extent, the EU even has a separate architecture for peacebuilding. The Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (while not the only peacebuilding funder) has also started setting up regional offices. Some observers said that this move was prompted in part by interinstitutional rivalry within the EU.

<sup>34</sup> Piloted by the US in Ethiopia, a crisis modifier is a form of built-in budgetary flexibility for responding to small-scale and local crises. While the terminology is part of the humanitarian and development lexicon, it varies in implementation, depending on the donor agency in question.

<sup>35</sup> For more information, see the *Doing Development Differently* and *Thinking and Working Politically* communities of practice.

#### 4.4. Local governance and area-based approaches

Most actors in Somalia agree that the survival of the Somali federal system depends on stabilisation and development at a sub-national level. There has been a dramatic rise in the opportunities for cooperation at sub-national level during the past couple of years. Regional governments have recently been established in all FMS and district councils are being formed in a number of them.

At a national level, coordination among humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors can only go so far until it becomes a navel-gazing exercise or an endless debate centred on principles and organisational constraints. In the case of Somalia, the gradual development of local governance and local service delivery is an opportunity to localise the HDP nexus by empowering local and regional stakeholders to make assistance more responsive and more relevant to community needs and aspirations (Stamnes 2016: 3). Our interviewees agreed by and large that the greatest untapped potential for strengthening governance in Somalia, lies at the sub-national (FMS), district or even lower levels of governance. For them, the federal system can take root only if it is built bottom-up, to complement what has so far been a Mogadishu-focused top-down process.

Beyond individual projects, examples of coordinated sub-national action are scarce. In fact, any information on who does what and where tends to be centralised in Mogadishu, either in UN platforms (HCT and UNCT), the thematic SDRF pillar working groups or other fora such as the S6<sup>36</sup> and the Comprehensive Approach to Security (CAS). As sub-national statebuilding slowly progresses and access improves, Somali and international actors may have an interest in bringing coordination down to the regional level. In Somaliland (which considers itself an independent country, although Mogadishu regards it as a member of the federation), for example, the regional authorities have called on donors to report on activities they perform under the Somaliland NDP. Other FMS authorities still very much lack the planning and coordinating capacity to call for regional coordination themselves.

At the same time, donor agencies are moving towards supporting emerging local governance in Somalia. The UN's Joint Programme for Local Governance and Decentralised Service Delivery (JPLG), for example, has been working with newly created district councils and authorities since 2008. This has taken the form of specific initiatives and public infrastructure works aimed at helping local authorities to deliver services, this being a key element of confidence-building between local government officials and their constituencies. Designed with stabilisation in mind, CRESTA/A serves a similar purpose, by linking top-down statebuilding with local reconciliation and bottom-up community approaches to recovery. With the exception of the JPLG programme, these local governance initiatives are small in scale. Many of them are still in an experimental stage.

As new opportunities open up, so donors including DFID and SDC are actively pushing for area-based or territorial approaches to local development in Somalia. Area-based approaches take a geographic entity as their starting point and seek to create a bottom-up dynamic involving a range of local stakeholders, including public officials, the private sector and traditional leaders. Such approaches open the door to different forms of cooperation and the coordination of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts. By starting from local realities and experimenting with locally-led planning processes, area-based approaches offer opportunities for responding to short-term humanitarian needs while building resilience through locally-led planning. They strengthen the legitimacy of local authorities by arranging for services to be delivered by new or existing public, non-profit-making or private entities that are already active in a

<sup>36</sup> The S6 are Turkey, the UAE, the UK, the EU, the US and the UN, who are the main partners backing Somalia's security sector development. See ISSAT, 2017 Comprehensive Approach to Security framework.

given area, and build trust between communities (including IDPs) and new, accountable authorities. They also entail dealing with local conflicts and power imbalances on the basis of local realities rather than on the strength of predetermined, top-down power constellations.

Developing integrated area-based approaches at scale in a fragile context like Somalia cannot be done without investments by humanitarians, development actors and the peacebuilding community. The main task in this regard involves dealing with the issues (both fundamental and practical) raised by humanitarian organisations and bottom-up peacebuilding organisations. Resistance prompted by practical realities such as a lack of understanding of what the nexus entails in area-based approaches (i.e. whether it means coordination, joint planning or a form of integrated programming in which all actors have their own humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programmes) is not easily overcome by hypothetical debate. Often, it is a question of learning by doing in *ad-hoc* coordination, working in consortia, and so on. Donors can also encourage different strands of the nexus by allocating funds to projects that call for cross-sectoral interventions in area-based approaches. That said, it may prove difficult to address principle-based concerns, such as impartiality, the politicisation of aid and peacebuilding to serve the statebuilding process, which may be raised by humanitarian and peacebuilding practitioners. Dispelling such concerns may require a fundamental reflection on the international aid industry and its role in Somalia. This type of analysis is well beyond the scope of this study.

Furthermore, while an area-based approach may be a good way of prioritising local needs and capacities, and strengthening state-society relations, it also poses certain risks, both inherently and in a specific context such as Somalia. Firstly, where territorial approaches form part of an overall approach built on state sovereignty, their details, i.e. *how and to what extent* external partners deal with local authorities, need to be carefully examined to ensure that they do not become a cover for circumventing national state authority. This is particularly pertinent in a country such as Somalia, where the division of power and authority between the central state and the FMS has not been resolved – and where in some cases the authority of the FGS is openly contested. Care must be taken to avoid further fragmentation of the state structure.

Secondly, and largely on account of the first reason, engaging directly with local authorities heightens the risk that external interests could be pursued in a country if these interests were compatible with the ‘narrow’ interests of local authorities, but not necessarily with the country’s national objectives. The recent spill-over of the Gulf crisis into Somalia, which saw a number of Gulf states forming direct alliances with FMS, is a good example of a situation in which a permissive ‘territorial approach’ could be instrumentalised to promote external interests at the expense of national interests (see ICG 2018: 14).

## 5. The implications of nexus-centred thinking for governance programming

At a national level, nexus approaches are reflected by the 2017 NDP, which seeks to harmonise the short-term humanitarian needs of a significant portion of society with the peace and security needs of the state and long-term development objectives. The point of departure for the NDP is the notion that the challenges facing Somalia can be tackled only by a coordinated, multi-pronged approach. This is also reflected the NDP. In other words, at a national political level, the nexus approach forms the basis – and not an auxiliary aspect – of statebuilding in Somalia. At a federal level, mechanisms have been put in place to facilitate coordination among different actors and sectors.

At a regional level, there is growing recognition that the FMS should play an instrumental role in operationalising the NDP. Our interviewees confirmed a growing awareness among both partners and implementers that the FMS should be more proactive and prominent in facilitating local development. This is easier said than done, however. The instability of relations between the FGS and the FMS (including the interpretation of constitutional rights and responsibilities), plus the comprehensive lack of capacity (technical, security and financial), affect the ability of the FMS to play the minimum coordinating or facilitating role expected of them.

The challenge for international support in 2018 is to go beyond state re-establishment at FMS and district levels and to concentrate on what local and regional authorities might have to offer, namely basic services (such as healthcare, education and food security), provisions for IDP integration, dependable justice, land administration, and so forth. Nexus-centred thinking could provide a conceptual framework for developing a local governance agenda that empowers nascent and fragile FMS and local authorities to respond to challenges relating to humanitarian needs, development and peacebuilding objectives.

In practice, a number of important problems will have to be addressed:

1. **Heightened conflict sensitivity.** Working with local governance actors always entails a risk of upsetting local power dynamics. Local service delivery in 'post-conflict' Somalia is not a vacuum, and structures (often private and/or informal) exist in most parts of the country. Governance programmes can learn and use peacebuilding methods to build consensus from the bottom up and avoid disruptive top-down planning methods.
2. **Dialogue on local service delivery in Somalia and the (future) role of local and regional authorities.** The Somali NDP identifies a clear gap in access to public utilities and services, specifically healthcare, education and sanitation (MoPIED 2017: 103). It also envisions a more important role for the FMS in the delivery of basic services. The situation today, however, is that services are delivered by a complex combination of public, private (i.e. profit-making), non-profit-making and international actors. The choice of a (future) model for service delivery (whether centralised, delegated, regulated or whatever) will largely define the basic mandate of regional and local authorities, and still needs to be clarified.
3. **Focus on urban resilience and inclusive urban development.** The vast majority of poor people in Somalia live in urban areas (59%) or IDP settlements (32%) (FGS 2016: 42). Mogadishu is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. In the event of shocks such as the 2017 drought, internal displacement drives people from rural to urban areas, which are often unable to deal with the extra stresses. 'Urban resilience' is the label given to the ability of communities, authorities and economic and social structures to withstand and adapt to recurring crises and acute shocks. Urban districts are more than just areas where challenges are concentrated. They also present significant economic opportunities and, from a governance perspective, create opportunities for raising revenue and rebuilding the relationship between state authorities and the population by means of infrastructure investments and quality services.
4. **A problem-driven, gradual approach to building state capabilities.** There is no single recipe for strengthening (emerging) local governance in fragile contexts. Successful programmes, including those in Somalia, tend to take a gradual approach to working with local authorities and decision-makers. Examples have shown that, even in the absence of strong state institutions, communities and authorities can come together to define and address specific problems. A gradual approach may

also help to avoid common capability traps, where state structures do not perform properly even though they seem to have been put in place (Pritchett 2012).<sup>37</sup>

To facilitate coordination among international and Somali stakeholders, coordinating mechanisms similar to federal mechanisms could be set up at a regional level. While local governance could mean various things, the nexus in its broader sense (i.e. coordinating sectoral interventions in order to reinforce gains) lends an entry point around which local governance and territorial programmes can be designed.

Thematically, durable solutions for IDPs and refugees also promote holistic approaches to displacement management. In the case of IDPs (which is an acute problem in Somalia), durable solutions entail rehabilitating and integrating them in their host communities, by providing day-to-day humanitarian supplies alongside long-term development assistance. Support is also sometimes extended to host communities in order to avoid tensions between host and displaced communities. Examples from other countries (such as South Sudan) indicate that peacebuilding programmes aimed at solving conflicts between host communities and displaced people are growing in relevance and demand in settings where long-term, recurring internal displacement is a pervasive reality. The nexus therefore lends itself to displacement management in line with durable solutions.

Nonetheless, the reintegration of IDPs and refugees with the aid of this multi-pronged approach is a complex and often political matter, not least in Somalia. Research and experiential evidence indicates that there is complex profiteering on the part of ‘gatekeepers’ or ‘black cats’, as they are known, who provide space for IDPs in order to attract humanitarian and development aid from which they can profit (by taking cuts or providing ‘security’ for humanitarian agencies) (Menkhaus 2016). There is therefore a risk of reinforcing and normalising this situation as the reintegration of IDPs almost always produces resource flows to the areas where they are to be integrated. Furthermore, when it comes to reintegrating refugees, the DS cannot be completely divorced from the global discourse on migration, with developed nations doing their best to minimise incoming refugee flows.

On the one hand, pushing the DS agenda is an attempt to end people’s indefinite refugee status by integrating them in the countries in which they have sought shelter for years. There is an undeniable justice element there. On the other hand, the agenda places a disproportionate burden on developing countries (such as Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya) currently hosting massive numbers of refugees. For this reason, we need to critically analyse the modalities of DS as a means of meeting the needs of IDPs and refugees. This means looking beyond their value as a contextual framework.

## 6. Conclusions: high ambitions and low incentives for nexus approaches in practice

The political situation in Somalia is changing. While relative stability should not be mistaken for lasting peace, recent progress on the federalisation agenda has given both Somalis and external partners new hope of long-term recovery and economic development. As Somalia remains heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance, pursuing integrated approaches and bridging the divide between humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peacebuilding are generally seen to be critical conditions for sustaining the advances made during the past few years. This is easier said than done, however.

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<sup>37</sup> There is a growing body of literature on the usefulness of problem-driven approaches to strengthening governance and public sector performance, especially in fragile contexts (See Woolcock 2014).

There is no shortage of policies calling for integrated or nexus approaches, both globally and in Somalia. But translating these policies into the practice with the aid of inter-agency coordination and operational coherence on the ground is one of the most difficult challenges faced by donor agencies and their partners in complex settings such as Somalia. The fragmentation of donor funding in different funding windows, the run for 'easy wins' and 'quick fixes' rather than long-term investments, and the lack of diversified capacity among NGOs for designing and implementing holistic rather than specialised programmes are just some of the reasons for this.

Moreover, when humanitarian funding and staffing are compared with development funding and expertise, the scales tip towards the former. And peacebuilding – in the relational, bottom-up, people-centred interpretation of the term – does not even stand a chance in this comparison unless interpreted as referring to security and statebuilding. Many more reasons can be listed as to why a nexus approach is hard to achieve, but the bottom line is that the ambitions for reform (i.e. to coordinate, integrate and alter organisational processes) and alignment with the 'new' policy discourse appear to be stronger than the incentives for actually doing so.

The network of donors supporting Somalia is a dense maze of foreign and regional donors, UN agencies, NGOs and implementing partners, all of whom have gradually evolved in line with the conflict situation since 1991. While most actors agree that the current political situation warrants reforming or even redirecting international support, this consensus has not been followed by sufficient reflection on the interest and incentives at work in the international support community that could drive – or block – new ways of working.

During the past few years, an abundance of coordination structures and mechanisms has been put in place to improve coordination and, most of all, to enhance the FGS's oversight and planning mandate. The national aid architecture and pillar working groups in particular are viewed as a big step in the right direction. Yet information-sharing is only one – and possibly the least ambitious – aspect of the 'nexus approach' or 'new way' of working, particularly because it has largely been a Mogadishu-centric exercise. The real nut to crack is how to strengthen the relevance of these structures and exchanges at FMS and district levels in Somalia. This means that 'governance programming' would need to look beyond strengthening the capabilities of the FGS and look at:

1. building confidence between the FGS and the FMS on specific issues, assuming that an overarching consensus (on the nature of federation and subsidiarity, for example) is hard to achieve;
2. matching top-down statebuilding approaches with a bottom-up equivalent in a way that creates confidence in local structures, builds resilient communities and ensures the sustainable delivery of services to the population.

Donor support in Somalia has a long history of humanitarian aid and statebuilding support. Foreign aid is not only a condition for relative stability, it has also become an integral part of the Somali societal fabric and the provision of basic services. In the absence of state structures and stability, humanitarian aid, together with the private sector and clan networks, has been the primary source of basic services and social protection in Somalia. While it has saved, and continues to save, countless lives in Somalia, it has also engendered a degree of path dependency that is difficult to break away from. Agencies, NGOs and implementing partners tend to focus on specialisation and the effective delivery of assistance, but generally only in their respective domains. In some instances, they are keener to maintain their niche in the Somali aid environment than to pursue the most pragmatic responses to the needs of their beneficiaries.

The UN system in particular appears to find it difficult to adapt to changing contexts, due to the incentive structure of separate UN agencies. While working under a single flag, UN agencies tend to operate as fully separate entities with specific mandates. This tends to inspire competition rather than cooperation. The 'New Way of Working' has only been semi-effective in Somalia. Although promoted by the triple-hatted DSRSG/RC/HC and mentioned in most, if not all, UN strategy documents, in practice, cross-agency coordination, let alone cooperation, tends to depend entirely on the interests of individual agencies. For this reason, it is generally confined to joint programmes involving just a few agencies.

In other words, silos between different sectors and disciplines are still very much the norm in Somalia. That said, we have identified several opportunities for advancing integrated approaches. Resilience, for example, is a useful concept for framing integrated approaches, and resonates much more than 'the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus'. It offers a 'programmable' framework for Somalia, particularly in relation to drought response. Resilience programmes also have a clear link with the Somali NDP and a level of political ambition that is far more manageable than statebuilding. Similarly, viewing internal displacement through a durable solutions lens may create more opportunities for linking humanitarian approaches with longer-term efforts leading towards community integration and development. Within the remit of donor-funded programmes, specific innovations can help blur the traditional lines separating primarily humanitarian aid from development cooperation. Flexible funding (through crisis modifiers, for example) and adaptive management can help donor support to be more problem-driven and responsive to local realities, including the type of governance in a given setting. 'Territorial approaches', i.e. starting from a local unit of intervention (bottom-up) and responding concurrently to a number of different needs, are being explored as new avenues for coordinated local action.

Somalia clearly illustrates that a top-down approach to incentivising cooperation has its limits. As the statebuilding process inches forward and (relative) stability is maintained, the real starting point for integrated or nexus approaches may well be at the local level. Regional and local administrations are gradually being established and this has to some extent cascaded the challenge for coordination from Mogadishu to FMS level and lower.

The use of area-based approaches to create a bottom-up dynamic involving a range of local stakeholders, including public officials, the private sector and traditional leaders, shows promise and could be undertaken both from a humanitarian (localisation) perspective and a developmental and peacebuilding perspective. Localising 'nexus approaches' through area-based or territorial approaches raises the question of 'who does what and where'. Humanitarians understand that target communities ultimately need sustainable livelihoods and working governance structures, and that humanitarian aid is a band-aid solution. Peacebuilding and development practitioners are also aware that the physical and economic well-being of the people they work with is under constant threat. But they do not always accept that these problems concern them, and often prefer to delegate the work to specialist organisations. Donors and NGOs can cross this rigid division of responsibilities among practitioners if sufficient flexibility (in terms of funding and technical know-how) and adaptability (in terms of awareness of local context and decision-making) is built into programming at all levels, from headquarters to implementing agencies.



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