



# NEWS LETTER

January - June 2019

To strengthen women's leadership and participation in decision-making processes, including electoral and structures in Somalia, making them more inclusive and gender responsive

## JP WPE - News Updates

### Leadership for Results Training for Somali Women Parliamentarians in Addis Ababa



Somali Women MPs who attend leadership training as part of gender equality initiative Addis Ababa, 25 June to 2 July 2019. (Photo credit: UNDP/Somalia)

From 25 June to 2 July 2019, twelve (12) Somali women parliamentarians have attended a UNDP supported a training of trainers on leadership for results in Addis Ababa. The training was part of United Nations (UN) initiative to promote gender equality and women's political participation in Somalia. The women MPs who took part came from the House of the People of the Federal Parliament of Somalia and the Upper House.

The training was organized by UNDP Somalia under a joint UN Women's Political Participation, Leadership and Empowerment (WPE) project, and aimed to increase the skills of Women Parliamentarians in advocating for gender equality and the rights of women and girls, and in taking more prominent leadership roles in decision making in government. It also looked at how to strategically address the underlying social causes of gender inequalities and to identify initiatives for positive change. Those taking part were also trained to carry out the same training for other female members of parliament and women leaders in

Somalia.

Senator Shukri Aden, of the Upper House of the Somali Federal Parliament, said trainings on leadership were vital for women. "These trainings are key in that they help us to forge strategic alliances and to create a platform for women leaders, so that we can work together to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in Somalia."

Hon. Nouria Isse, an MP of the House of the People of the Federal Parliament, said that she is committed to using the knowledge she gained to train other female members of the parliament at both federal and federal state level. "Because of this training, we now have in house leadership experts who can train a larger number of women parliamentarians, parliamentary committees and federal member states assemblies," she said.

Mubarik Mohamoud, UNDP Project Manager for the Women's Political Participation Project, highlighted that strong leadership is crucial for promoting women's political empowerment

and enhancing their role and participation in public life. "It is crucial for women MPs to enhance their existing leadership skills so that they can advocate for, and implement, laws and policies promoting the participation of women in decision-making," he said.

Somalia's Gender Inequality Index remains one of the highest in the world. Lack of access to education, gender-based violence, high maternal mortality, female genital mutilation, high numbers of women becoming internally displaced, and high percentage of child marriage are some of the obstacles that contribute to inequality. However, women's representation in politics in Somalia has been increasing in recent elections, following the acceptance of a 30 percent quota for women's representation in parliament at federal and federal member state level. The quota, which was won through sustained advocacy by Somali women's groups with UN and international support, paved the way for women to then win 25 percent of seats in parliament in the 2016 federal electoral process.

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# Somali Women's Convention

The Charter push for fifty per cent women quota across the three branches of government, all independent commissions, across all federal member states and all levels of governance



Dignitaries from FGS, FMS, civil society and women organizations gathered at the Somali Women's Convention. 5 March 2019, Mogadishu (Photo credit: UNDP/Somalia)

On the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019, the Joint UN Women's Political Participation, Leadership and Empowerment (WPE) project supported a three-day Somali Women Convention in Mogadishu led by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, in partnership with Federal and Federal Member State Governments and with civil society organizations.

The Women's Charter issued at the Convention calls for full inclusion of women across the political, economic and social spectrum in Somalia. It comes at a time the Somali Provisional Constitution 2012 is under review and as key electoral and political laws are developed.

In particular, the Charter calls for:

- ◆ A fifty per cent quota across all three levels of government;
- ◆ Zero tolerance for gender-based violence;
- ◆ Women's rights to be enshrined in the revised Constitution; and in the finalized electoral, security and political laws.
- ◆ Socio-economic rights in the form of women's equal access to land, and to economic opportunities and technologies, to ensure long term resilience and stability, is also a key call in the document.

Inputs to the Charter were given over the three days of the Convention by 300 delegates from federal and federal member state governments, women and youth group representatives, disability organisations, private sector organisations and members of academia from across the

country.

The event was attended by the First Lady of Somalia, Her Excellency Saynab Abdi Moalim, the Mayor of Mogadishu Abdirahman Osman, and the Prime Minister of Somalia, Hassan Ali Khaire, as well as federal and federal member state Ministers and Members of Parliament. The Chairperson of the National Independent Electoral Commission, Halima Ibrahim Ismail, also attended the event.

Presenting the Charter to Prime Minister Khaire, the Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Hon. Deqa Yasin, highlighted both the inclusive nature of convention and the importance of topics discussed in the development of the charter. "If women are supported in the areas that are mentioned in the charter, you will be contributing to sustainable peace in this country, and for the first time the women of this nation will feel as part and parcel of decision making in this country," she said.

Prime Minister Khaire said he would work with his Government to carry out the Charter, and called for an action plan for its implementation. "We need to integrate gender and human rights in the work of all ministries. That is why it is important for each minister to play a role in the implementation of the Charter," he said.

"I ask the Minister of Women and Human Rights, and her staff, to come up with an action plan to carry out the recommendations set out in the Charter, so that it can be included in the next budget of the country," he added.

Speaking at the opening of the Convention, the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia and UN Resident Coordinator, Peter de Clercq, said he very much welcomed the Women's Charter and the consultative and inclusive nature of the event. "I hope that this will be a rallying ground for the women of this country, for women parliamentarians, and for women of influence to be able to move the cause of women forward."

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative, a.i., for Somalia, George Conway, congratulated the Ministry and the Government in bringing together diverse representatives from the Federal Government, federal member states, the private sector, civil society, and women's organisations. "I would like to reiterate UNDP's and the UN's commitment and support to this process and to women's empowerment, inclusion and gender equality in Somalia," he said.

The Somali led Women's Convention was partially supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as well as by the Somalia Stability Fund (SSF).

## Mainstreaming Gender in the National Development Plan

The Project has supported the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MWHRD) to review the National Development Plan (NDP-9) to integrate gender mainstreaming into the plan. With the current eighth National Development Plan expiring in December 2019, the ninth National Development Plan (NDP-9), 2020-2024, under development, will build on the achievements and the lessons learned from the NDP-8. The draft NDP 9 is expected to provide the Somalia a clear path to strengthening gender mainstreaming across the government and state institutions, including a significant increase of women in political participation. The NDP-9 is expected to be finalized by October 2019.



## Somali Women Charter presented at 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

On 16 March 2019 at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York, Somali Federal Government Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, H.E. Ms. Deqa Yasin, presented a Women's Charter for Somalia that calls for a fifty percent representation of women in government and in socio-economic sectors in the country.

The Women's Charter was developed during a three-day Women's Convention in Mogadishu from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> March with the attendance of 350 women and men gender champions from across Somalia.

Pre-CSW consultation for the 63<sup>rd</sup> session also carried out in Mogadishu on 20 February 2019 which attended by 70 women. The meeting brought together representatives from across the country in various areas including government, national and civil society to identify the priorities of the rural Somali women and to come up with a common and shared vision to consolidate a document on the status of women in Somali to be presented at CSW63.

Later in 15 March 2019, the National Statement by the Federal Government of

Somalia was developed based on consultations on the themes of the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women conducted in Somalia prior to the event. The statement specifically highlighted the need for dedicated attention and resources for the specific challenges and opportunities faced in post-conflict countries. It also emphasized the inter-connections between sustainable infrastructure, public services and different forms of violence against women as well as customary practices; including FGM and early marriages. The National Statement of the Federal Government of Somalia was delivered by the First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Somalia to the UN.



*The Minister, Deqa Yasin, outlines the importance of the Women's Charter at the Somali Women's Convention, March 2019. Photo: UNDP/Somalia/Ismail Taxta*

## CEDAW sensitization process

To initiate the CEDAW ratification process, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MoWHRD) with support from UN Women/JP WPE commissioned an exposure mission to Egypt in June 2019 to learn best practices on the CEDAW ratification process in an Islamic country context. The study mission has been designed to provide a learning opportunity to MoWHRD technical team from Egypt on the lessons learned and best practices on issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

The MoWHRD has consulted religious leaders and other influencers during the planning process with a comprehensive report on the lessons learned to be shared upon the mission completion.

## Somalia Women Parliamentarians Trained on Reviewing Legislation from Gender Perspective

On March 25-26, 2019 under the JP WPE project, UNDP supported a capacity building initiative of women law-makers on "Reviewing Legislation with a Gendered Lens" in Mogadishu. The training attended by 20 members of federal parliament from the parliamentary committees on Justice, Religious Affairs & Endowment, Human Rights, Women and Humanitarian Affairs, and the women caucuses of both houses (House of People and the Upper House). Also present in the training were members of the parliament secretariat and legal advisors.

The participants were trained to review legislation from a gender perspective and it particularly focused on building their abilities to identify gender gaps in legislation as well as formulate gender-responsive legislation.

Based on the training, UNDP is supporting on developing a handbook on "Reviewing Legislations from a Gender Perspective" which will be a resource tool and a user guide for all MPs in reviewing legislations with gender lens.



*Capacity building of women law-makers on Reviewing Legislation with Gender Lens. 25-26 March 2019. Mogadishu (Photo: UNDP/Somalia)*



## Workshop to enhance women's role in forthcoming elections

On 8 & 9 May 2019, with support from the JP WPE project and with UN Women coordination, the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) conducted two workshops for political party leaders and members of the Parliament in Mogadishu and the South-West State with aims to enhance women's role in the forthcoming elections. The workshops which brought together over 124 participants, comprising on policymakers, discussed the draft Electoral Law with a gender lens.

The project supported NIEC to successfully define Article 23 of the Political Party Law, whereby no political party shall be entitled to receive funding and given a permanent certificate if more than two-thirds of its registered party leaders and staff are of the same gender, same clan or hail from the same region of the country.

The women leaders from the civil society and MPs were made aware of the limitations of the

current provisions of the draft Electoral Law in securing a minimum of 30% reserved seats for women in the parliament. Women CSO leaders are engaged with MPs and women caucuses to envisage a continued campaign and lobby during the July session of the parliament when the draft law is expected to be heard.

The JP WPE programme has been instrumental in strengthening NIEC's own capacity on gender by providing resources in the form of a Gender Advisor.



NIEC chairperson with political party leaders and MPs in a workshop to enhance women's role in upcoming elections 8 May 2019, Mogadishu. (Photo: UN Women/Somalia)

## Media campaign to increase women political participation

The Project supported the Ministry of Women, Development & Family Affairs (MOWDAFA), Puntland in conducting four radio talk shows and disseminating 20 radio messages to enhance the voices of women. MOWDAFA conducted the media campaigns and community outreach to increase awareness in six targeted districts to initiate universal suffrage; one person one vote. One district has been selected as a pilot, it will be extended to the other districts. The strategy is aimed at overcoming the challenges of the clan system which greatly hinders women participation in politics. MOWDAFA in Puntland commenced partnerships with key ministries, CSOs and media in increasing voice of women in constitution review processes.

## MOWDAFA conduct forum on women political participation in Puntland



Representatives from CSOs, members parliamentary committees and women aspirants in women forum, 9 May 2019, Puntland. (Photo: MOWDAFA/Somalia)

On 8 & 9 May 2019, the Ministry of Women Development and Family Affairs (MOWDAFA) in collaboration with UNDP/JP WPE project conducted a women forum to strengthen partnership and networking between ministry, women head of CSOs, parliamentary gender and human rights committees and women aspirants on women leadership and politics. The event attended by 35 (10 men and 25 women) participants from civil society groups, MOWDAFA, Parliamentary gender committee, and women aspirants. After

the end of the forum, a new political movement called Puntland Women Political Movement was launched, aimed at to build capacity of women activists to actively take part in grassroots campaigns and electoral processes as well as mobilize women for the 2020 elections. The ministry developed a TOR

focusing on strategies and ideas on measures to increase women's participation in political and electoral processes especially on themes of democratization and good governance, constitutional review and federalism, fundamental human rights, social accountability, political participation in general, jobs in government sector and essential knowledge of ways to advance their rights agenda.

## Technical advisory support to MOWHRD in drafting legislation and effective engagement in the constitutional review process

UNDP hired an international expert to provide technical support to the ministry for inclusion of women's rights and gender equality in the constitutional review and legislative processes. The aim is to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MOWHRD) to effectively engage in the process of legislative reform in relation to women participation in inclusive politics and decision making. The expert reviewed the provisional federal constitution and electoral bills from the gender lens and provided gender analysis on gaps and recommendations. Gender review toolkits were also developed to assist the legislators and the ministry to review legislation from a gender perspective.



# Women candidates from political parties attend networking workshop to promote women rights in Politics

From 15-16 June 2019, fifty women candidates representing three political parties from six regions of Somaliland were brought together for networking conference in Hargeisa. During the two day workshop, an effective and strong networking platform of the political parties has been created for Somaliland women candidates to connect and advance women in politics. The established network will work on women quota integration into the electoral process to promote women's rights in the political sphere for social justice and equitable development.

Women candidates from the political parties first time agreed to build synergy and fight for common agenda on promoting Women's rights and getting women leaders within political parties' leadership hierarchy. All the political parties' chairpersons and their deputies

are men. The network created will improve the collaboration among Somaliland women candidates within political parties so that they can share

common challenges and practical experiences to maximize the success of women candidacy in politics.



Minister, Hon. Hinda Jama Hirsi officially opened the networking workshop for Somaliland women candidates, 15 June 2019, Hargeisa. (Photo: UNDP/Somalia)

## 8 March - International Women's Day Celebrations in Somaliland

On 8 March 2019, in all the six regions of Somaliland, a series of interconnected events on International Women's Day took place to celebrate and acknowledge the role and importance of women in equitable and sustainable development.

Human right activists, women political aspirants, influential civil society women leaders, politicians, and university students participated in different events, discussed the challenges and opportunities of Gender Quota legalization in electoral process.

During the March, dozens of police forces participated, walked and commemorated the International Women's Day celebration in Hargeisa.



Dr Edna Aden with women police forces is participating in the 8th March event in Hargeisa



Women Police force marching on International Women's Day in Hargeisa



Students from Gollis, Hargeisa and Admas Universities participated in different events on International Day of Women



Women are gathered in Somaliland for the celebration of on International Day of Women

Photos: MESAF/Somalia



UNDP acknowledges the contribution from DFID to the Joint Programme on Women Political Participation, Leadership and Empowerment

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