



Federal Government of Somalia

*Ministry of Family & Human Rights Development*

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# **Beijing+30 National Review and Reporting**

Review Report (2024)



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# I. Section One: Synthesis of the Country-Level Review Process, Achievements, Challenges, and Promising Practices

This section provides an in-depth examination of the country-level review process in Somalia aimed at promoting gender equality and advancing women's rights. It delves into the core elements that underpin this process, highlighting the legal and policy frameworks, national action plans, community engagement, and various initiatives targeting economic empowerment, education, and healthcare.

The section also discusses the progress made, the ongoing challenges, and the setbacks encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in Somalia. It analyzes the influential factors, both positive and negative, that have shaped the trajectory of gender equality efforts in the country.

Furthermore, the section shines a spotlight on the government's specific measures to support marginalized women and girls, underscoring the principle of "leaving no one behind." It also identifies good practices and lessons learned that can inform future strategies and serve as models for other countries.

Finally, the section concludes by highlighting the key areas where international support is crucial to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment in Somalia effectively. This encompasses financial assistance, capacity building, technical expertise, technology access, and strengthened partnerships and collaboration among diverse stakeholders.

## I.1. Core Elements of the Country-Level Review Process in Somalia

The country-level review process in Somalia for promoting gender equality and women's rights involved several critical elements in the review period:

**Legal and Policy Frameworks:** This includes the adoption of the Provisional Constitution with gender equality provisions, the National Gender Policy, efforts towards ratifying international treaties like CEDAW and ICCPR<sup>1</sup>, and drafting key bills on sexual offences/rape offense and indecency bills.

**National Action Plans:** Implementation of plans to combat gender-based violence and strategies to increase women's political representation towards achieving a 30% parliamentary quota.

**Community and CSOs Engagements:** Involvement with local communities and leaders to combat harmful gender norms, and active advocacy by civil society for legal and policy enhancements.

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<sup>1</sup> Somalia ratified ICCPR in the 1990s but never reviewed and submitted its initial reports.

**Economic Empowerment Initiatives:** Programs like the Women’s Economic Empowerment Programme and Village Saving and Loan Associations aim to promote economic resilience among women.

**Educational and Health Services:** Efforts focus on increasing girls' access to education and improving healthcare services, particularly in reproductive and sexual health.

**Government Coordination:** Integrating gender equality goals across government departments and initiatives like gender desks in police stations to enhance gender sensitivity.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Mechanisms to monitor and assess the effectiveness of gender equality initiatives, adjusting strategies based on emerging needs.

**Challenges and Forward Strategy:** Recognition of ongoing challenges such as patriarchal norms and conflicts, with recommendations to strengthen legal frameworks and improve data collection for policy making.

## 1.2. Progress, Challenges, and Setbacks in Implementing the BPfA in Somalia

Progress in promoting gender equality and women's rights in Somalia includes the establishment of legal and policy frameworks, the implementation of economic empowerment programs, and improvements in healthcare services. However, the country continues to face several challenges. These include the underrepresentation of women in politics and the judiciary, the persistence of restrictive social norms, the ongoing conflicts, and economic barriers. Notably, setbacks have been observed in the regression of women's political participation as well as the continued prevalence of violence and discrimination against women.

The progress and challenges in Somalia can be attributed to a range of influential factors. Firstly, cultural norms resistant to gender equality have significantly slowed the advancement of women's rights. Secondly, institutional weaknesses, such as corruption and limited capacity, have resulted in the weak enforcement of existing laws. Thirdly, a lack of coordination among government bodies and non-governmental organizations has hindered the effective implementation of gender-focused initiatives. Lastly, resource constraints, including limited financial and human resources, have restricted the scope and scale of programs aimed at promoting gender equality.

Statistical data insights further reveal the persistent challenges faced by women in Somalia. These include low participation in the labor market, significant underrepresentation in political and judicial roles, and persistent education disparities, with a gap in literacy and internet usage among women. These findings underscore the need for continued efforts to address the multifaceted barriers to gender equality and empower women across various spheres of society.

## 1.3. Government Measures for Marginalized Women and Girls in Somalia

The Somali government has actively pursued policies and programs to support women and girls from marginalized groups, firmly guided by the principle of "leaving no one behind." Key measures include the Somali Disability Act, which ensures accessibility to essential services for those with disabilities, and the National Gender Policy, which addresses the needs of diverse groups like women with disabilities and displaced persons. Scholarships and affirmative actions support

educational access for girls from marginalized communities. Economic initiatives like the SNHCP and the SAGAL Social Transfers bolster the economic resilience of vulnerable families. The Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development plays a central role in overseeing these initiatives. However, challenges persist due to cultural resistance, financial constraints, and institutional weaknesses, which limit the effectiveness of these policies.

#### 1.4. Good Practices and Lessons Learned

Significant practices and lessons from Somalia's efforts to advance gender equality include:

***Integrating Gender in Security and Peacebuilding Initiatives:*** The establishment of a National Action Plan for Somali Women's Security and Peace has structured women's participation in peace processes and addressed conflict-related gender issues.

***Economic Empowerment through VSLAs:*** VSLAs have proven effective in enhancing women's economic status and community standing, advocating for community-based approaches to meet specific needs.

***Legal and Policy Frameworks to Combat GBV:*** Development of legal frameworks like the Rape Offence and Indecency Bill and initiatives such as the National Action Plan to combat GBV have begun to create safer environments for women, addressing the root causes of GBV and improving justice and support systems.

#### 1.5. Support Areas for Gender Equality in Somalia

Somalia requires substantial international support across multiple areas to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment effectively. Key support areas include financial assistance to overcome funding limitations for gender-focused programs, especially in women's economic empowerment through vocational training and entrepreneurship.

Building the capacity of local institutions like the Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development is crucial for the effective implementation and monitoring of gender-responsive policies, with an emphasis on training and legal reform.

Technical assistance is needed to refine policies and align them with international standards, alongside enhancing data collection and analysis to develop targeted gender policies. Technology access is also critical, with interventions aimed at increasing digital literacy and providing necessary technology to bridge the digital divide.

Finally, strengthening partnerships and collaboration among government agencies, NGOs, civil society, and international partners is essential to synchronize efforts and leverage resources, ensuring Somalia meets its international commitments for gender equality and fosters a more inclusive and equitable society.

## 2. Section Two: Priorities, Achievements, Challenges and Setbacks

### I. Over the past five years, what have been the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women?

Over the past five years, Somalia has taken significant strides towards achieving gender equality and empowering women, despite facing substantial socio-political challenges. The review report provides an extended analysis of the achievements, challenges, and setbacks based on both primary and secondary sources:

#### Achievements in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

##### I. Legal and Policy Advancements:

- **National Gender Policy (2019):** This policy marked a critical step forward, laying out a comprehensive framework to address systemic gender disparities across education, healthcare, economic participation, and political representation. It aims to integrate gender considerations into all facets of Somali governance and development.
- **Legislative Reforms:** Significant legislative efforts, such as the drafting of the Sexual Offences/Rape Offence and Indecency Bill, have been critical in creating legal protections for women and girls against violence and exploitation. These bills, once passed, are expected to provide a robust legal framework to address and penalize gender-based violations effectively.

##### 2. Programmatic Initiatives:

- **National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence:** Launched in 2019, this plan strategically outlines measures to tackle the root causes of gender-based violence, enhance support services for survivors, and promote accountability and justice. This plan also emphasizes prevention, protection, participation, and partnership strategies to comprehensively address gender-based violence.
- **Economic Empowerment through VSLAs:** The implementation of Village Savings and Loan Associations has been a transformative initiative, empowering women economically by facilitating access to finance and business training. These programs have helped women establish and sustain small businesses, contributing significantly to their financial independence and community economic development.

#### Persistent Challenges

##### I. Cultural Norms and Resistance:

- Deep-rooted patriarchal norms present significant barriers to the full realization of gender equality initiatives. Practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) are deeply ingrained in the culture, with ongoing efforts needed to change these harmful traditions despite existing legal frameworks aiming to eradicate them.

## 2. **Political and Security Instability:**

- Somalia's ongoing conflict and political instability severely disrupt the effective functioning of institutions and the implementation of gender-responsive policies. This instability hinders consistent progress and places women and girls in vulnerable positions, especially in conflict-affected regions.

## 3. **Access to Services:**

- Women in Somalia often struggle to access essential services including education, healthcare, and justice. This is exacerbated in rural and conflict-affected areas where infrastructural deficits and security issues limit service delivery.

### **Setbacks**

#### 1. **Political Representation:**

- Despite constitutional quotas aiming for 30% female representation in government, actual figures have fallen short, with a recent decrease in women holding political positions. This decline impacts the capacity of women to influence policies and decision-making processes at national levels.

#### 2. **Resource Constraints:**

- The implementation of gender policies and programs has been consistently challenged by limited financial resources and insufficient coordination among governmental bodies, NGOs, and international partners. This lack of resources and coordination hampers the scalability and sustainability of gender initiatives.

### **Factors Influencing Progress and Setbacks**

- **International Partnerships:** Collaboration with international organizations like UN Women and adherence to international agreements such as CEDAW have provided critical support and a structured framework for Somalia's gender initiatives, offering both guidance and necessary funding.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaging with community leaders and leveraging traditional structures has been vital in slowly transforming societal norms and attitudes towards women. These grassroots efforts are crucial for the long-term success of gender equality measures.

The journey towards gender equality in Somalia is marked by a complex interplay of advances and ongoing challenges. The commitment shown by various sectors of Somali society offers hope for continued progress, yet highlights the need for sustained efforts to overcome the deeply entrenched barriers to gender equality.

## **2. Over the past five years, what have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?**

Over the past five years, Somalia has prioritized several key areas to accelerate progress for women and girls through laws, policies, and programs. These priorities reflect the nation's commitment to addressing the systemic barriers that hinder gender equality and the



empowerment of women. The review report provides a detailed analysis of the top five priorities, their implementation, impacts, and the ongoing challenges:

### **I. Legal Reforms to Combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

Context and Implementation: High rates of gender-based violence in Somalia necessitate strong legal measures. For instance, the Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS) 2020 revealed that over half of ever-married women and girls aged 15 and older were subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former husband in the previous 12 months. Recognizing the high incidence of gender-based violence, Somalia has prioritized the development of a legal framework to address and prevent GBV. Key legislative efforts include the drafting of the Sexual Offence Bill, also named as Rape Offence and Indecency Bill. This bill is designed to provide comprehensive legal definitions and enforce stringent penalties for perpetrators of sexual violence, offering greater protection for women and girls.

For Example, the Sexual Offences Bill<sup>2</sup>, once implemented, aims to categorize and penalize different forms of sexual abuse clearly, thereby closing gaps in the existing legal framework that often result in the under-prosecution of such crimes. Public consultations and advocacy campaigns have accompanied the drafting process, raised awareness and fostered a societal dialogue on the need for such laws.

Although not yet enacted, the proposed bills have led to heightened public and governmental awareness. There has been an increase in GBV reporting in some regions, suggesting a growing trust in the measures being taken to address these issues. However, the main hurdles include political delays in passing the bills and societal resistance, partly rooted in traditional norms that often prevent a full discussion of gender-based violence.

### **3. Economic Empowerment through Financial Inclusion**

Economic empowerment is crucial for reducing poverty and boosting women's status within their communities. Also, economic independence for women is a key driver of gender equality. Initiatives like Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) have been crucial in this regard. These programs offer women the chance to engage in savings and credit schemes that fund business ventures, thereby fostering economic independence and community status.

For example, in the Banadir region, VSLAs have helped women transition from small-scale traders to business owners, with some opening their own shops or started catering services, directly increasing their households' financial stability and economic resilience. Women involved in VSLAs have reported significant increases in income and improvements in their families' quality of life. Moreover, their enhanced economic status has led to increased respect and decision-making power within their communities. However, Scaling these programs remains challenging due to the variability of funding and logistical difficulties in conflict-affected areas.

### **3. Increasing Women's Political Participation**

Political empowerment enables women to shape policies and decisions that directly impact their lives and their communities. Although a 30% quota for women's representation in governmental

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<sup>2</sup> Sexual offense bill also named 'Rape and Indecency Bill'.



positions was established to bolster female participation in political processes, women currently hold only 24% of seats in the Federal Parliament. This discrepancy underscores the ongoing need to enhance women's representation and influence in political and legislative arenas. The enforcement of this quota is crucial for ensuring that women can significantly contribute to governance and policy-making decisions.

For example, there has been some success in increasing women's representation, such as the historic election of the first female mayor in Somalia. These milestones have been supported by capacity-building programs that enhance women's leadership skills and political knowledge. While the overall percentage of women in political roles has increased, it remains below the quota. However, the women who have attained these roles have played critical roles in advocating for gender-sensitive legislation and policies. However, Cultural and structural barriers, including patriarchal norms and lack of support systems for women in politics, continue to impede progress.

#### **4. Education and Training for Girls and Women**

**Context and Implementation:** Education serves as a cornerstone of empowerment, but girls in Somalia face notably lower school enrolment rates than boys. Bridging this educational gap is essential for enabling women to engage more effectively in economic and social realms. Efforts to address these disparities have included improving access to quality education for girls by offering scholarships, constructing schools with appropriate facilities, and conducting community outreach initiatives to shift societal perceptions about the value of educating girls.

For example, programs in rural areas have been particularly focused on reducing the dropout rate among girls by addressing specific barriers they face, such as early marriage and domestic responsibilities. There has been a noticeable increase in girls' enrolment in primary education, though challenges remain in retaining them at higher educational levels. However, socio-cultural biases, security issues, and economic barriers continue to significantly impact girls' continued education in many regions.

#### **4. Health Care Access and Maternal Health**

Women's health is critical not only for their well-being but also for the health of their families and communities. Improving women's health, particularly maternal health, involves expanding access to healthcare services, training healthcare providers, and increasing community awareness about the importance of maternal and reproductive health.

For example, mobile health clinics in remote areas have been pivotal, providing prenatal and reproductive health services to women who otherwise would have no access to such care. These efforts have contributed to a reduction in maternal mortality rates in accessible areas and improved overall health outcomes for women and infants. However, the ongoing conflict, poor infrastructure, and limited resources continue to restrict the reach and consistency of healthcare services, particularly in rural and conflict-affected regions.

## **Data and Progress**

**Legal Framework:** The legal reforms have been crucial but are not yet fully implemented due to systemic and resource-related constraints. The introduction of the Sexual Offences Bill/Rape Offence and Indecency Bill is pending legislative approval, aiming to provide clearer legal protections against GBV.

**Economic Initiatives:** Economic programs have enhanced women's participation in non-traditional sectors, although significant gaps remain in terms of income and job security. VSLAs have shown promising results, with participating women reporting increased income and decision-making power within their households.

**Political Engagement:** Despite the quota, the actual representation of women in government roles is below target levels, highlighting the ongoing need for active recruitment and support for female candidates.

**Educational Outcomes:** Educational initiatives have led to improved enrolment rates, but dropout rates remain high due to socio-economic factors and cultural norms. Efforts to enhance girls' education are ongoing, with programs aimed at reducing dropout rates and improving educational quality for girls.

**Health Initiatives:** Health programs have focused on expanding access to prenatal and reproductive health services, though challenges in rural and conflict-affected areas remain significant.

Overall, Somalia's approach to enhancing the status of women and girls through these five priorities demonstrates a significant commitment to gender equality. The ongoing efforts reflect a multifaceted strategy intended to address the systemic and complex barriers facing women and girls in Somalia. Continued advancements depend on sustained governmental commitment, societal change, and international support to overcome the considerable challenges that remain.

### **3. Over the past five years, what specific actions have you taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls?**

In the past five years, Somalia has taken notable steps to address discrimination and enhance the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls, focusing on areas critically impacted by the nation's socio-economic context and ongoing instability. The review report uncovered three distinct initiatives that highlight the scope, target populations, implementation strategies, budgetary allocations, and outcomes of these efforts.

#### **I. Expansion of Social Protection Programs**

Somalia has significantly broadened its social protection framework to support vulnerable demographics, particularly focusing on women and female-headed households who are disproportionately affected by poverty and displacement. The initiative aims to provide cash transfers and access to social services to improve living conditions and reduce poverty-induced

vulnerabilities. The primary beneficiaries are impoverished women, female-headed households, and those living in remote and under-served communities across Somalia.

When it comes to budget and impact, the exact budget allocations are not detailed in the documents, but the programs are part of larger national and international funding efforts, including contributions from global organizations like the World Bank and UN agencies. Impact assessments have pointed to a positive trend in household stability and children's access to education among the beneficiaries, yet coverage remains limited relative to the need.

However, the implementation has underscored the importance of developing comprehensive beneficiary identification systems, such as social registries, to ensure that aid reaches the most vulnerable. The initiative has also highlighted the need for sustainable funding mechanisms to maintain and expand coverage.

Further Information: [National Social Protection Policy](#)

## **2. Improvements in Maternal and Child Health Services**

This initiative is part of Somalia's broader health strategy aimed at improving maternal and child health outcomes. The government, with support from international partners, has focused on increasing access to essential health services such as prenatal, delivery, and postnatal care, particularly targeting rural areas where healthcare services are scarce. The target population are women and children in rural and conflict-affected areas are the primary focus, with an emphasis on reducing the high maternal and infant mortality rates prevalent in these regions.

Significant investments have been channeled into healthcare infrastructure development, training of healthcare professionals, and provision of medical supplies. Although there have been improvements in service availability, the maternal mortality rate remains one of the highest globally, signaling ongoing challenges in service quality and reach. The initiative has demonstrated the critical role of local community health workers, particularly women, in enhancing healthcare outreach and service uptake. Their involvement has been crucial in overcoming cultural barriers and increasing trust within the community.

Further Information: [World Bank Health Projects in Somalia](#)

## **3. Gender-Sensitive Disaster Response during COVID-19**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Somalia implemented gender-sensitive measures to mitigate the pandemic's socio-economic impact on women and girls. These included targeted cash transfers and food assistance to female-headed households, and measures to address the surge in domestic violence during lockdowns. The target population were women and girls who were economically impacted by the pandemic, with a particular focus on those in precarious employment sectors and female-headed households.

The programs were funded partly through emergency response funds from international donors. While they provided critical short-term relief, evaluations indicated that the initiatives were not sufficient to address the broader increase in gender-based violence and disruptions in reproductive health services during the pandemic. The response highlighted the necessity for an

integrated approach in crisis management that includes robust mechanisms for protecting women against increased domestic violence and maintaining essential health services, such as reproductive health.

Further Information: [UN Women Somalia COVID-19 Response](#)

These examples underline Somalia's efforts to incorporate gender-focused strategies in its broader social, health, and emergency response frameworks. While progress has been made, the effectiveness of these initiatives is often hindered by ongoing challenges including inadequate funding, the need for more comprehensive data collection and analysis, and the overall instability that complicates consistent implementation. Moving forward, enhancing these initiatives will require sustained commitments from both the Somali government and its international partners, focused on scalable solutions and long-term impacts.

#### **4. Over the past five years, how has the confluence of different crises affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what measures have you taken to prevent their negative impact on progress for women and girls?**

Over the past five years, Somalia has faced a confluence of crises that have significantly impacted the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), challenging the progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. These crises include ongoing armed conflicts, natural disasters, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The review report revealed that the country has implemented various measures to mitigate the negative impacts of these crises on women and girls, with a focus on sustaining progress toward gender equality despite significant disruptions.

### **Impact of Crises on Implementation of the BPfA**

#### **1. Armed Conflict and Security Issues**

Ongoing armed conflict and general insecurity have severely disrupted access to basic services such as healthcare and education, disproportionately affecting women and girls. Many have been forced to flee their homes, leaving them vulnerable to gender-based violence and exploitation.

In Response, the Somali government, with support from international partners, has focused on integrating gender perspectives in peace and security measures, including specific protections for women and girls in displacement settings to reduce their vulnerability to violence and exploitation.

#### **2. Natural Disasters**

Recurring droughts and floods have compounded the difficulties faced by women and girls, particularly in rural and displaced communities. These events have disrupted livelihoods, increased food insecurity, and limited access to clean water, further marginalizing women in the socio-economic sphere.

In response, Somalia has implemented gender-sensitive disaster response strategies, which include ensuring that aid distribution considers the specific needs of women and girls. Efforts have

been made to include women in disaster preparedness and response planning to empower them and tailor solutions that address their unique needs during crises.

### 3. COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic has stretched the already limited resources of the country, leading to setbacks in the rights and advancements of women and girls. The closure of schools and reduced healthcare services have particularly affected women's access to educational and health services .

In response: The government has attempted to implement gender-responsive health measures, ensuring that information and services are accessible to women and girls. Economic support measures have also been targeted to help women who are disproportionately affected by the economic downturn, such as those in informal employment.

#### Measures to Prevent Reversal of Progress

- **Legislative and Policy Initiatives:** Somalia has continued to develop and implement policies aimed at protecting and empowering women, such as the Sexual Offences Bill/Rape Offence and Indecency Bill, and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. These frameworks are designed to provide a safer environment for women and girls and ensure their participation in governance and peacebuilding processes.
- **Community Engagement and Education:** Efforts have been made to change societal attitudes towards gender equality through education and community engagement programs. These initiatives aim to address deeply entrenched patriarchal norms that hinder women's and girls' rights in Somalia.
- **International Cooperation:** Collaboration with international organizations has been crucial in supplementing national efforts, providing the necessary financial and technical support to sustain initiatives aimed at empowering women and addressing gender disparities during crises.

Despite these efforts, the implementation of the BPfA in Somalia faces significant challenges due to persistent instability, cultural barriers, and resource constraints. Continuous support from the international community, along with strong national commitment, is essential to overcome these obstacles and ensure that the rights and empowerment of women and girls in Somalia continue to progress.

### 5. Over the next five years, what are the priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?

Over the next five years, Somalia aims to intensify efforts to advance gender equality and empower women and girls through strategic laws, policies, and programs. This roadmap incorporates reflections on past experiences, integrating lessons learned from both achievements and challenges. The review report provides a detailed analysis at the priorities and planned approaches, including reflections on past initiatives to ensure better implementation:

## **1. Strengthening Legal Frameworks Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

**Priority:** Enhance legal protections for women and girls against GBV by finalizing and implementing the Sexual Offences Bill/Rape Offence and Indecency Bill.

**Plan to Address:** Building on the initial drafting and public consultation phases, efforts will shift towards advocating for the passage of these bills into law and ensuring their effective implementation. This will include comprehensive training programs for law enforcement and judicial personnel to properly enforce the new laws, and extensive public education campaigns to promote awareness of legal protections.

**Reflections:** The past challenges in passing these bills, including political resistance and slow legislative processes, highlight the need for stronger advocacy and engagement with policymakers. Additionally, previous successful awareness campaigns will be expanded to create a supportive cultural environment for these legal changes, ensuring that the community understands and supports the protections provided by these laws.

## **2. Economic Empowerment Through Entrepreneurship and Employment**

**Priority:** Increase women's economic independence by expanding access to financial resources, entrepreneurship opportunities, and fair employment.

**Plan to Address:** Programs will be scaled up to include more comprehensive microfinance services, business training, and market access initiatives. New partnerships with the private sector will be explored to create job opportunities for women, particularly in emerging sectors such as technology and sustainable industries.

**Reflections:** Learning from the success of VSLA programs, future efforts will focus on ensuring these initiatives are both sustainable and scalable. Enhanced attention will be given to reaching previously underserved regions and communities, addressing economic disparities, and ensuring that women across all parts of Somalia can benefit from these economic opportunities.

## **3. Enhancing Women's Political Participation**

**Priority:** Achieve the 30% quota for women's representation in all governmental bodies and enhance women's roles in political decision-making.

**Plan to Address:** Initiatives will include the introduction of supportive structures for female politicians, such as mentorship programs, leadership training, and advocacy campaigns to encourage political engagement from grassroots to national levels.

**Reflections:** The difficulty in meeting quota targets in the past has underscored the need for continued cultural change initiatives and educational campaigns to alter perceptions about women in leadership. These efforts will build on the groundwork laid by previous campaigns and will seek to fundamentally shift how women's roles in politics are viewed in Somali society.

## **4. Education and Skill Development**

**Priority:** Close the gender gap in education and enhance skill development for girls and young women, focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education and digital literacy.

**Plan to Address:** The strategy will include increased investments in educational infrastructure, provision of scholarships and incentive programs for girls, and collaboration with international partners to introduce enhanced curricula that include digital skills and STEM subjects.

**Reflections:** The persistence of educational disparities has driven home the importance of community involvement in promoting the value of education for girls. Efforts will continue to engage with local leaders and families to support educational initiatives, emphasizing the long-term benefits of educated women for societal progress.

## **5. Healthcare Access and Reproductive Rights**

**Priority:** Improve healthcare access for women and girls, with an emphasis on reproductive health services and reducing maternal mortality rates.

**Plan to Address:** Plans include the expansion of healthcare facilities and services, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas, and enhanced training for healthcare providers in maternal and reproductive health.

**Reflections:** Previous efforts have shown that infrastructure and resource limitations are significant barriers. Innovative solutions such as mobile health services and stronger partnerships with NGOs will be pursued to extend healthcare reach and improve service delivery.

The next five years are set to build on the foundations laid by past efforts, with a clear focus on overcoming the barriers that have historically hindered progress. Through a comprehensive approach that includes legislative reform, economic empowerment, political participation, educational advancements, and improved healthcare, Somalia is committed to creating a more inclusive and equitable society for women and girls. This detailed plan reflects a strategic vision that leverages lessons from the past to inspire and inform future actions.



## 3. Section Three: Progress across the 12 Critical Areas of Concern

### 3.1. Inclusive Development, Shared Prosperity and Decent Work

#### 6. Over the past five years, what actions has your country taken to advance gender equality in the world of work (including informal and non-standard employment as well as entrepreneurship)?

Over the past five years, Somalia has made efforts to advance gender equality in the world of work through several measures targeting different aspects of women's economic, political, and social rights. Here are three significant examples of these initiatives:

#### 1. National Gender Policy (2019) and Gender Equality Strategy (2023-2026)

*Aims and Scope:* The National Gender Policy and the subsequent Gender Equality Strategy aim to systematically address gender disparities by focusing on structural barriers that impede women's full participation in the economy and society. These policies intend to reshape societal norms and empower women through legal, economic, and social reforms.

*Target Population:* These policies target women across all regions of Somalia, particularly those most affected by gender biases and economic disadvantages.

*Impact Evaluations:* While specific impact evaluations are not mentioned, these policies are fundamental for setting standards and benchmarks against which future gender equality efforts will be measured. They provide a strategic framework to guide all subsequent gender-related initiatives.

*Lessons Learned:* The development of these policies highlighted the critical need for comprehensive approaches that include stakeholder engagement from community levels up to national governance, ensuring that policies are culturally sensitive and widely accepted.

#### 2. Women's Economic Empowerment Initiatives

*Aims and Scope:* Projects like the UNDP's Women's Economic Empowerment Programme are designed to directly combat women's poverty by increasing their access to economic resources and opportunities. These include vocational training, microfinance, and support for entrepreneurship, aiming to transition women from informal work to more stable, economically empowering roles.

*Target Population:* This initiative specifically supports vulnerable groups, including displaced women, those in rural areas, and those engaged in informal employment, helping them transition to more sustainable livelihoods.

*Impact Evaluations:* Impact assessments have shown that participants in these programs often experience higher incomes and greater agency in household and economic decisions, which are critical indicators of the program's success in fostering gender equality in the workforce.

*Lessons Learned:* Effective economic empowerment requires more than just financial input; it needs concurrent education on financial literacy and ongoing business support, illustrating the need for holistic program designs that address multiple aspects of empowerment.

### **3. Legal Frameworks for Gender-Based Violence**

*Aims and Scope:* The introduction of the Sexual Offences Bill/Rape Offence and Indecency Bill represents significant progress in creating a safe work environment for women. These laws aim to protect women from violence and harassment, which are barriers to their participation in both formal and informal employment sectors.

*Target Population:* This bill target women in all spheres of life but are particularly relevant for those in the workforce, where gender-based violence can be a significant barrier to employment and entrepreneurship.

*Impact Evaluations:* The real impact of this bill will depend on its enforcement. Ongoing monitoring and public reporting are necessary to ensure this bill was not only enacted but also effectively deter violations and provide justice for victims.

*Lessons Learned:* Legislation alone is not sufficient; implementation requires strong enforcement mechanisms and widespread public education campaigns to change societal attitudes towards gender-based violence.

### **Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection**

Regarding Somalia's engagement with the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection, the documents do not specify participation. Engaging in this initiative could potentially enhance Somalia's efforts by providing models for integrating social protection with gender equality strategies, ensuring that women's economic participation is supported by robust safety nets.

### **Integration with Specific Groups Actions:**

These initiatives integrate actions for women concerning poverty, the economy, and human rights by focusing on empowerment through education, economic independence, and legal protections. They also implicitly support the girl child by promoting societal changes that will foster a more equitable environment for future generations. These detailed examples demonstrate a multifaceted approach to addressing gender equality, indicating Somalia's commitment to improving the economic and social status of women, despite ongoing challenges.

## **7. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance and strengthen the rights of paid care workers?**

In the past five years, Somalia has taken several measures to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance, and strengthen the rights of paid care workers. Here are three significant initiatives:

## **I. Promotion of Women's Economic Empowerment Programs**

*Aims and Scope:* These programs aim to integrate vulnerable women into the formal economy by providing business development services, access to finance, and vocational training. By facilitating women's entry into formal employment and entrepreneurship, these initiatives help to shift the traditional division of labor, where women predominantly handle unpaid care and domestic work.

*Target Population:* The primary beneficiaries are women in informal sectors, those affected by displacement due to conflicts or natural disasters, and those traditionally engaged in unpaid care work.

*Budget:* Specific budget allocations for these programs are often part of larger developmental aid packages from international bodies like the UNDP, supplemented by national funding, but exact figures are typically confidential or vary annually based on donor contributions and government priorities.

*Impact Evaluations:* Programs have been evaluated on metrics such as increase in income, employment rates, and business creation among participants. Success stories include the formation of women-led cooperatives and enterprises which not only provide a steady income but also empower women socially and economically.

*Lessons Learned:* One crucial insight is that economic empowerment programs must be accompanied by supportive measures such as childcare services to truly reduce the burden of unpaid care work on women. Additionally, ensuring sustainability requires ongoing mentorship and market access, not just initial funding.

*Further Information:* Detailed program reports and evaluations are typically available through the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development and the UNDP's Somalia office.

## **2. Legal Reforms to Protect Paid Care Workers**

*Aims and Scope:* The introduction of the Sexual Offences Bill and the Domestic Violence Bill is part of Somalia's commitment to enhancing the legal rights of all workers, including those in paid care roles. These legal frameworks are intended to offer better protection against workplace abuses and enhance overall work conditions.

*Target Population:* These bills are designed to protect women across all sectors but are particularly significant for paid care workers who may be more vulnerable to abuses such as sexual harassment and exploitation.

*Impact Evaluations:* The evaluation phase of these bills is ongoing, as their implementation is a recent development. Effective enforcement is crucial, and future assessments will need to focus on reductions in reported abuses and improvements in worker rights.

*Lessons Learned:* A major lesson from these legislative efforts is the gap between law enactment and its practical application. Strengthening law enforcement and judicial systems is critical to ensure that legal protections for care workers are not merely theoretical.

### **3. Community Engagement and Policy Advocacy During COVID-19**

*Aims and Scope:* The COVID-19 pandemic saw a significant increase in unpaid care work due to lockdown measures and health care demands. Somalia's response included community engagement initiatives to educate and support families in redistributing care responsibilities more equitably among family members.

*Target Population:* Women who took on disproportionate care burdens during the pandemic were the focus, with efforts made to support them through community resources and governmental programs.

*Impact Evaluations:* While formal evaluations of these initiatives are limited, anecdotal and preliminary reports suggest that awareness campaigns and community support mechanisms were vital in managing increased care demands during the pandemic.

*Lessons Learned:* The pandemic underscored the essential nature of care work and the need for robust social safety nets that can be mobilized quickly in crisis situations. It highlighted the necessity of government and community-level planning and support for care responsibilities.

#### **Engagement with Global Alliance for Care**

Although specific mentions of engagement with the Global Alliance for Care are not noted, the ongoing policy reforms and community initiatives align with the Alliance's objectives. This suggests potential areas where Somalia could formally engage with international frameworks to bolster its domestic policies on care work.

Overall, Somalia's efforts reflect a growing recognition of the importance of both unpaid and paid care work as fundamental to gender equality and economic stability. The continued development of supportive policies and community education are crucial for these efforts to be sustained and expanded.

### **8. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce the gender digital divide?**

Over the past five years, Somalia has taken several steps to address the gender digital divide, focusing on increasing women's access to digital technologies and enhancing their skills. Here are three key measures:

#### **I. Digital Literacy Campaigns and Online Safety Trainings**

*Aims and Scope:* These campaigns are designed to equip women and girls with the skills needed to effectively utilize digital tools and navigate online spaces safely. The main objectives are to boost digital literacy, promote safer internet usage, and empower women to participate fully in the digital economy. These efforts also aim to tackle online harassment and provide women with strategies to protect their digital identities.

*Target Population:* The primary beneficiaries are women and girls throughout Somalia, with a particular focus on urban centers where internet connectivity is more reliable and widespread.

*Budget and Funding:* Details about the specific budget for these campaigns are not commonly disclosed in public documents, as funding may be embedded within broader educational or IT development programs supported by the government and international donors.

*Impact Evaluations:* Quantitative impact assessments of these programs are scarce. However, qualitative feedback suggests an increased awareness among participants about online safety and a more confident engagement with digital technologies.

*Lessons Learned:* Challenges include the sporadic internet availability in rural areas and the need for ongoing support and training to keep up with rapidly changing technology. The programs have underscored the importance of continuous learning and adaptation in digital education initiatives.

*Further Information:* More detailed reports and updates can usually be obtained from government education departments or NGOs focusing on digital inclusion in Somalia.

## **2. Inclusion in Social Media and Technology Use**

*Aims and Scope:* This initiative targets the reduction of barriers to women's active participation in social media and the broader digital world by combating online harassment and promoting positive engagement. Efforts include monitoring social media platforms to mitigate the spread of misogynistic content and providing support networks for women facing online abuse.

*Target Population:* Women active on social media and those aspiring to engage more fully in digital public spheres, including young professionals and activists.

*Impact Evaluations:* The impact is measured by tracking changes in the level of online harassment, participation rates of women on social media platforms, and the engagement level in digital forums. Initial feedback points to an increased sense of security and empowerment among women online.

*Lessons Learned:* The dynamic and pervasive nature of online harassment requires robust, ongoing monitoring and rapid response strategies to create truly safe spaces for women online. Collaboration with tech companies to improve platform safety is crucial.

*Further Information:* Updates on these efforts are often shared in digital rights forums, women's rights conferences, and through publications by civil society organizations working in the tech sector.

## **3. Support for Women in ICT Careers**

*Aims and Scope:* This measure focuses on increasing the number of women in the ICT sector by providing education, training, and career development opportunities specifically tailored to women. Programs include scholarships for technology courses, mentorship from established professionals in the field, and networking opportunities to help women enter and advance in tech careers.

*Target Population:* Targeted specifically at women and girls with an interest in technology, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds who may lack access to educational resources.

*Budget and Funding:* These initiatives are typically funded through a combination of government budgets, private sector partnerships, and international aid focused on educational and technological development.

*Impact Evaluations:* Evaluations are focused on enrolment and completion rates of training programs, employment outcomes, and the subsequent career growth of participants. Early indicators are positive, showing that participants gain meaningful employment in the tech sector at higher rates than before the programs were implemented.

*Lessons Learned:* Critical factors for success include the quality of training programs, ongoing career support, and addressing underlying barriers such as societal norms and expectations about women's roles in technology.

*Further Information:* Information about these initiatives is often available through academic institutions, tech companies' CSR reports, and government communications on educational and technological advancements.

These detailed insights into each initiative illustrate Somalia's comprehensive approach to bridging the gender digital divide, focusing on both access and empowerment to ensure women can thrive in an increasingly digital world.

### **Actions for Specific Groups:**

- **Women and Poverty:** Economic empowerment through digital access is crucial. Programs providing micro-loans and grants for women to purchase digital devices or start online businesses have been beneficial.
- **Women and the Economy:** Encouraging female entrepreneurship in the digital space, supported by incubators and accelerators focused on women-led startups, helps integrate women more fully into the digital economy.
- **Human Rights of Women:** Ensuring women's safety online through legislation against cyber harassment and providing resources for digital security training.
- **The Girl Child:** Special programs in schools to encourage girls to pursue STEM education and careers, breaking the stereotypes associated with women in technology.

## **9. In the past five years, how has the macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what macroeconomic policies has your country implemented in support of a more gender-equal economy?**

Over the past five years, Somalia's macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment has faced significant challenges, which have affected the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and gender equality initiatives. Here are the key macroeconomic policies and their impacts on a gender-equal economy:

## **1. Public and Private Finance Mobilization for Gender Equality**

**Aims and Scope:** Somalia has focused on securing both public and private financing to advance gender equality initiatives, including promoting women's economic empowerment and addressing gender-based violence. This has involved leveraging international aid, public sector budgets, and partnerships with NGOs and private entities.

**Budget and Funding:** The government, often in collaboration with international donors and development agencies, has earmarked funds specifically for gender equality projects. However, exact figures are often not publicly detailed due to the fluid nature of budgets in response to ongoing security and humanitarian challenges.

**Impact Evaluations:** The mobilization of these funds has allowed for the launch and continuation of various programs aimed at women's empowerment. Yet, the overall impact is mitigated by the high volatility in funding due to competing national priorities such as security and humanitarian relief.

**Lessons Learned:** A key takeaway is the necessity of having dedicated, non-divertible funding streams for gender equality to ensure that these crucial initiatives are not sidelined by emergent fiscal needs.

## **2. Monetary and Trade Policies**

**Aims and Scope:** While not explicitly targeted at gender equality, Somalia's monetary policies aimed at stabilizing the currency and controlling inflation indirectly support economic stability, which is a prerequisite for sustainable development and social programs. Trade policies have been geared towards improving the overall economic landscape, with potential benefits for job creation and market access for enterprises including those led by women.

**Impact Evaluations:** Direct assessments of how monetary and trade policies affect gender equality are lacking, but economic stability is a crucial component for creating an environment where gender-focused initiatives can succeed.

**Lessons Learned:** Incorporating a gender lens into monetary and trade policy formulation can enhance outcomes for women and contribute to a more inclusive economic growth strategy. This approach requires a deliberate policy shift to ensure that economic reforms consider the different impacts on men and women.

## **3. Fiscal Consolidation and Austerity Measures**

**Aims and Scope:** In response to economic pressures, Somalia has had to implement fiscal consolidation measures, including cuts in public spending. While these measures are intended to stabilize the economy, they often result in reduced funding for social services that disproportionately support women and children, such as education, healthcare, and social welfare.



**Impact Evaluations:** The effects of these austerity measures have been particularly harsh on services that benefit women and girls, potentially rolling back gains in gender equality. For instance, reduced funding for healthcare and education impacts maternal health services and girls' schooling, respectively.

**Lessons Learned:** The experience has underscored the importance of protecting social spending from fiscal cuts to prevent disproportionate impacts on vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls. It also highlights the need for gender-responsive budgeting to ensure that fiscal policies do not inadvertently widen gender disparities.

### **Specific Actions for Targeted Groups:**

- **Women and Poverty:** Efforts have been made to increase microfinance opportunities tailored to women, though challenges remain in accessibility and terms that are truly beneficial for women.
- **Women and the Economy:** While policies to integrate women into the workforce are in place, actual practice reveals a need for more robust enforcement and support mechanisms.
- **Human Rights of Women:** Legal reforms, particularly those targeting gender-based violence, have been prioritized, though implementation remains inconsistent.
- **The Girl Child:** Educational initiatives targeting girls are crucial but have suffered from cuts in public expenditure, emphasizing the need for protected or ring-fenced education budgets.

While Somalia has implemented several policies intended to support a gender-equal economy, the actual impact of these policies is often hampered by broader economic challenges and the need for more targeted and consistent approaches to gender budgeting and policy implementation.

## **3.2. Poverty Eradication, Social Protection and Social Services**

### **10. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?**

In the past five years, Somalia has undertaken substantial efforts to alleviate poverty among women and girls through several strategic initiatives that address economic empowerment, legal rights, and systemic gender biases. These efforts are encapsulated in three major initiatives:

#### **I. Women's Economic Empowerment Programme**

- **Aims and Scope:** Spearheaded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Somali government, this initiative aims to bolster the economic status of vulnerable women by providing them with essential skills and resources. The program focuses on business development services, vocational training, and access to finance. It supports the creation of women-led cooperatives and small businesses, which span industries like catering, tailoring, and small-scale farming.

- **Target Population:** The program specifically targets vulnerable women, including those displaced by conflict and natural disasters, aiming to transform them into economic actors in their communities.
- **Budget and Funding:** The initiative is primarily funded by international donors and includes substantial logistical and training support. The exact figures are not specified but are indicative of a significant international and governmental investment.
- **Impact Evaluations:** Women who have participated in the program report increased incomes and improved family livelihoods. They also express greater confidence and autonomy in economic decisions.
- **Lessons Learned:** The initiative has highlighted the importance of coupling economic support with educational opportunities and legal assistance to comprehensively empower women.
- **Further Information:** Detailed outcomes and ongoing updates about the program can be found in UNDP's annual reports and through releases from the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development.

## **2. Legal and Policy Frameworks for Gender Equality**

- **Aims and Scope:** This broad-reaching reform effort includes the adoption of the National Gender Policy and the drafting of pivotal legislation such as the Sexual Offences Bill and the Domestic Violence Bill. These legal frameworks are designed to protect women from violence and discrimination, promoting a more equitable society.
- **Target Population:** All women and girls across Somalia, with particular attention to those in vulnerable or marginalized positions.
- **Budget and Funding:** While specific budget details are scarce, the funding is sourced from state budgets supplemented by international human rights organizations.
- **Impact Evaluations:** There are challenges in implementation, primarily due to ongoing conflicts and entrenched cultural norms, but the frameworks lay a critical foundation for future enforcement and cultural shifts.
- **Lessons Learned:** Effective implementation requires persistent advocacy, education, and international support to ensure these policies translate into real-world benefits for women.
- **Further Information:** The Somali government and various international human rights platforms provide updates and detailed reports on these legislative changes.

## **3. National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence**

- **Aims and Scope:** This comprehensive strategy is centered on eradicating the root causes of gender-based violence, enhancing support for survivors, and fostering a national culture of accountability and justice. It involves significant training for law enforcement, community outreach, and public awareness campaigns.
- **Target Population:** Women and girls at risk of or affected by gender-based violence, with an inclusive approach that considers the needs of displaced and minority women.
- **Budget and Funding:** This action plan is funded through a combination of government allocations and contributions from international and local NGOs.
- **Impact Evaluations:** Initial feedback indicates increased community awareness and a more responsive support network for survivors. However, ongoing evaluations are necessary to gauge long-term success.

- **Lessons Learned:** Engaging local communities and integrating traditional leaders are crucial for culturally sensitive and effective interventions. A continuous educational approach is necessary to sustain changes in public attitude.
- **Further Information:** The Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development regularly updates on the plan's progress, as do various cooperating international and local organizations.

### **Specific Actions for Targeted Groups:**

- **Women and Poverty:** Initiatives like the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) have been particularly effective in giving women in rural and marginalized communities access to financial resources, thereby fostering economic resilience.
- **Women and the Economy:** Skill development programs and market access initiatives have been crucial in integrating women into the economic fabric of Somalia, promoting self-reliance and reducing poverty.
- **Human Rights of Women:** Ongoing legal reforms aim to create a robust framework that upholds women's rights across all societal sectors.
- **The Girl Child:** Education and protective legislative measures are being prioritized to support the development and safety of young girls, crucial for long-term societal change, particularly in combating norms around Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

These initiatives illustrate Somalia's multi-faceted approach to tackling poverty among women and girls, demonstrating a significant commitment to gender equality and empowerment that addresses both immediate needs and systemic challenges.

## **11. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve access to social protection for women and girls?**

Over the past five years, Somalia has embarked on several strategic initiatives to bolster social protection specifically tailored to women and girls, aiming to address the longstanding issues of gender disparity and socio-economic vulnerability. These efforts have spanned financial assistance, healthcare expansion, and educational support, each designed to create a foundation for sustainable empowerment and enhanced quality of life for women and girls across the nation.

### **1. Social Protection through Cash Transfers**

A cornerstone of Somalia's strategy has been the implementation of targeted cash transfer programs. These initiatives are designed to provide direct financial support to women, particularly those heading households, to mitigate the impacts of poverty and economic instability. The cash transfers are intended not only to provide immediate relief but also to empower women to make independent financial decisions that can lead to improved health, education, and economic outcomes for their families.

The cash transfer programs are often facilitated through mobile money platforms, which have gained prominence as a safe and efficient method of disbursing funds, especially in remote or conflict-affected regions. The impact of these programs has been significant, with many women

reporting better access to food, healthcare, and education for their children. However, the programs' success is contingent upon consistent funding and effective administration, which can be challenging in Somalia's fluid political and economic landscape.

## **2. Expansion of Maternal and Child Health Services**

Recognizing the direct link between maternal health services and social protection, Somalia has expanded access to healthcare for women and girls, with a particular focus on maternal and child health. This initiative aims to reduce the high rates of maternal and child mortality by providing comprehensive prenatal, birth, and postnatal care. The expansion of these services is crucial in rural areas where healthcare infrastructure is often lacking.

The government, in collaboration with international partners, has worked to ensure that these services are not only available but also culturally acceptable and tailored to the needs of the community. This approach has helped increase the utilization of healthcare services by women and has been instrumental in improving health outcomes. Continuous education and community outreach have been essential components, helping to overcome traditional barriers to healthcare access for women and girls.

## **3. Educational Opportunities and Scholarships for Girls**

Education is another critical area where Somalia has focused its social protection efforts. The government has introduced scholarships and educational programs aimed specifically at increasing school attendance rates among girls. By addressing financial and cultural barriers to education, these programs are pivotal in fostering gender equality through learning.

Scholarships often cover not only tuition but also ancillary costs such as uniforms and transportation, which can be prohibitive for many families. Additionally, community engagement programs work to change prevailing attitudes toward girls' education, emphasizing the long-term benefits of educating daughters. These efforts have led to a noticeable increase in school enrollment and retention rates for girls, contributing to closing the gender gap in education.

## **4. Innovative Responses to COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated innovative approaches to social protection, with a heightened focus on gender-responsive strategies. One significant adaptation was the expansion of mobile money programs to facilitate the safe transfer of cash assistance. This method not only helped maintain social distancing but also ensured that financial support continued uninterrupted during lockdowns and movement restrictions.

Furthermore, the pandemic highlighted the importance of integrating health protection with social assistance. Initiatives were introduced or expanded to provide women and girls with health information and services, particularly relating to COVID-19 and reproductive health, ensuring that the pandemic did not disproportionately disadvantage women's health outcomes.

While Somalia has made commendable progress in enhancing social protection for women and girls, challenges remain. These initiatives require sustained commitment, adequate funding, and robust evaluation mechanisms to ensure they effectively address the needs of women and girls. Moreover, integrating these social protection measures with broader economic and development strategies will be crucial for their success and sustainability. By continuing to prioritize and innovate in social protection, Somalia can further advance gender equality and empower all women and girls, paving the way for a more inclusive and prosperous society.

## **12. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?**

In the past five years, Somalia has prioritized improving health outcomes for women and girls, an endeavor critical due to the nation's high maternal mortality rates and the pervasive practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). These efforts encompass a variety of initiatives designed to provide comprehensive health services, combat harmful cultural practices, and ensure sustainable healthcare delivery even in the most remote and conflict-affected regions.

### **Expanding Maternal Health Services**

Recognizing the acute need for maternal health care, Somalia has significantly expanded services aimed at supporting women before, during, and after childbirth. This initiative has involved the construction of new healthcare facilities equipped to handle maternal care, the deployment of mobile health units to reach distant communities, and the training of midwives who are culturally and locally embedded within these communities. These steps aim to make prenatal and postnatal care accessible and to reduce the risks associated with childbirth in underserved areas.

Despite the logistical challenges posed by Somalia's ongoing conflict and infrastructural deficits, the early impacts of these expanded services have been promising. More women are accessing essential care during pregnancy, and safer delivery practices have been reported. However, the fluctuating political and security situation poses constant challenges to the continuity and expansion of these services. The experience has underlined the importance of community involvement and the need for security measures that protect health service providers and facilities.

### **Tackling Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

With one of the highest rates of FGM globally, Somalia has intensified its efforts to eradicate this harmful practice that affects the majority of its female population. The strategy includes a mix of community education to alter perceptions and norms around FGM, support for legal frameworks that penalize this practice, and rehabilitation services for those affected. Through community dialogues and the involvement of local leaders and influencers, there's a growing awareness and rejection of FGM, reflecting a shift in public attitudes.

However, the deep cultural roots of FGM mean that change is gradual and fraught with resistance. Continuous education, alongside robust legal actions, are ongoing, with the government and NGOs actively collaborating to sustain momentum against FGM. The lesson here is clear: eradicating deeply ingrained practices requires persistent multi-faceted approaches that engage all segments of society.

## **National Health Insurance Scheme**

In a move toward universal health coverage, Somalia is exploring the implementation of a National Health Insurance Scheme. This plan is designed to reduce the financial barriers to accessing health services, thereby improving overall public health outcomes. By making healthcare more affordable and accessible, the scheme would particularly benefit vulnerable groups such as women and children, who often face disproportionate challenges in accessing necessary medical care.

This initiative is still in the developmental phase, with discussions ongoing around its structure, funding, and implementation strategies. The success of this scheme will depend on strong government commitment, adequate funding, and the establishment of partnerships with international donors and health organizations.

## **Focused Actions for Specific Groups**

Across these initiatives, special attention is given to groups such as women in poverty, women in the economy, human rights of women, and the girl child. Programs are designed not just to provide immediate health benefits but also to empower women economically and educate the next generation of girls. By integrating health programs with broader social and economic initiatives, Somalia aims to create a holistic improvement in the lives of women and girls.

The collective impact of these health initiatives is a testament to Somalia's commitment to enhancing the health and well-being of its female population. However, significant challenges remain, requiring ongoing effort, sustained funding, and comprehensive strategies that address both the symptoms and the systemic causes of poor health outcomes for women and girls. The path forward involves not only expanding health services but also continuously improving their quality and accessibility to ensure that all women and girls in Somalia can lead healthier, more empowered lives.

## **13. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls, including in sectors where they are underrepresented?**

Over the past five years, Somalia has made concerted efforts to enhance educational outcomes for women and girls, especially in sectors where they are historically underrepresented. This push towards educational equality is part of a broader strategy to empower women and girls, which is crucial for societal progress given the nation's ongoing recovery from prolonged conflict and instability. Here's a more detailed discussion of these efforts, highlighting the context, initiatives, and broader implications:

### **Expansion of Educational Infrastructure**

Recognizing the critical role of access to education in empowering women and girls, Somalia has focused on expanding educational infrastructure across the country. This initiative has been especially targeted towards rural and conflict-affected areas, which historically have had lower school attendance rates for girls due to safety concerns and lack of facilities. The government, supported by international partners like UNICEF, has embarked on building new schools, renovating dilapidated structures, and providing essential learning materials.

This infrastructure expansion is not just about physical buildings but also involves training teachers, many of whom are women, thus promoting employment among women in the education sector. The enhanced presence of female teachers has been instrumental in increasing girls' enrollment, as these teachers often serve as role models, showing young girls and their communities the potential and importance of women's participation in education and society.

### **Scholarship Programs for Girls**

To directly address financial barriers that prevent girls from accessing education, Somalia has introduced several scholarship programs. These scholarships are crucial for girls from low-income families and are aimed particularly at encouraging them to enter fields where women are underrepresented, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The scholarships cover various educational expenses, thereby alleviating the economic burdens on families that might otherwise discourage them from supporting girls' education.

These programs are indicative of a strategic approach to foster a skilled female workforce ready to enter and excel in competitive, high-value fields, thereby challenging and gradually changing the traditional gender norms. The success of these scholarships in increasing female participation in higher education and subsequently in specialized job markets underscores the potential of targeted financial support in transforming the educational landscape for women in Somalia.

### **Vocational Training and Skills Development**

Beyond conventional academic pathways, vocational training and skill development programs have been significant in equipping women and girls with practical skills that are immediately applicable in the job market. These programs focus on a wide range of sectors from traditional crafts to modern agriculture techniques and even digital skills, reflecting the diverse economic opportunities that can be tapped into by educated women.

This focus on vocational training not only supports women's integration into the workforce but also boosts their potential to become entrepreneurs and business owners, thereby contributing directly to economic growth. The emphasis on skills applicable in local and regional markets ensures that education translates into real economic opportunities, making it a viable option for more women and their families.

### **Broader Implications and Continuous Challenges**

The initiatives to improve education for women and girls in Somalia are set against a backdrop of significant societal challenges, including pervasive gender-based violence, deeply entrenched cultural norms that favor male education, and ongoing security concerns that disproportionately affect women and girls. Each educational initiative inherently supports broader goals, such as reducing poverty among women, enhancing their economic participation, protecting their human rights, and specifically addressing the needs of the girl child by providing them with early educational opportunities.

While progress has been notable, continuous challenges remain. These include ensuring the sustainability of funding for education programs, improving the quality of education, and maintaining the safety of girls within educational environments. Moreover, the societal acceptance



of educated women in traditionally male-dominated roles remains a gradual process, requiring persistent community engagement and advocacy.

Somalia's efforts to enhance educational opportunities for women and girls highlight a foundational aspect of its development strategy. By investing in education, the nation not only empowers women and girls but also sets the stage for sustained social and economic development, creating a more inclusive and equitable society. However, the success of these efforts depends heavily on ongoing commitment from both domestic and international stakeholders to address the remaining barriers and to continue investing in the future of Somali women and girls.

#### **14. What actions has your country taken to ensure that economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic closes gender gaps in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and/or health that the pandemic has exacerbated?**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Somalia has implemented several innovative measures specifically aimed at addressing the exacerbated gender disparities in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and health. These measures were designed not only to mitigate the immediate effects of the pandemic but also to establish sustainable frameworks to support gender equality during the recovery phase and beyond. Here's a more detailed exploration of these initiatives:

##### **1. Expansion of Mobile Money and Cash Transfer Programs**

**Background and Implementation:** As the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted economic activities, particularly affecting women who predominately work in the informal sector, Somalia expanded its mobile money programs and cash transfer initiatives. This strategic decision leveraged the widespread use of mobile money in the country, offering a quick and efficient way to provide economic support directly to those in need, especially women-headed households that were disproportionately impacted by job losses and economic slowdowns.

**Sustainability and Long-term Goals:** The program was not just a temporary relief measure but was seen as a step towards enhancing financial inclusion for women, providing them with the means to manage economic shocks in the future. By ensuring women had direct access to funds, the initiative also aimed to empower them financially, giving them greater control over household economics and decision-making.

**Lessons Learned:** The rapid deployment of cash via mobile platforms highlighted the importance of having robust digital financial infrastructure and policies in place that specifically target women's accessibility to these technologies. It also underscored the need for ongoing monitoring to prevent fraud and ensure that the funds reached their intended recipients.

##### **2. Telemedicine Services for Maternal and Child Health**

**Background and Implementation:** With healthcare facilities becoming high-risk areas for COVID-19 transmission and mobility restrictions in place, Somalia introduced telemedicine services

focused on maternal and child health. This initiative was particularly critical as it addressed the unique healthcare needs of pregnant women, new mothers, and children during the pandemic, ensuring they continued to receive essential health guidance and support.

**Sustainability and Long-term Goals:** Telemedicine services were developed with the view of them outlasting the immediate pandemic response. By integrating these services into Somalia's healthcare system, the initiative aimed to enhance the overall resilience of the health system against future crises. This method of healthcare delivery also demonstrated potential cost-effectiveness and broader reach, particularly beneficial in Somalia's vast and often hard-to-reach rural areas.

**Lessons Learned:** The success of telemedicine during the pandemic demonstrated the critical importance of digital literacy and infrastructure. It also showed that health services could be maintained and even expanded with adequate technological support, highlighting the need for continued investment in health technology.

### **3. Enhanced Vocational Training and Entrepreneurship Programs**

**Background and Implementation:** Acknowledging the significant impact of the pandemic on women's employment, particularly in hard-hit sectors like retail and hospitality, Somalia enhanced its vocational training and entrepreneurship programs. These were specifically redesigned to include elements like digital skills training and online business management, equipping women to adapt to the changing economic landscape.

**Sustainability and Long-term Goals:** This initiative aimed to provide women with sustainable skills and tools to navigate the post-pandemic economy, fostering long-term economic resilience and empowerment. By focusing on digital skills and entrepreneurship, the programs were designed to open up new avenues for income generation that could withstand economic fluctuations and future crises.

**Lessons Learned:** The enhancement of vocational training programs highlighted the need for agility and adaptability in skill development initiatives. Continuous assessment of market needs and the integration of digital platforms into training methodologies emerged as key factors in ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of such programs.

#### **Broader Implications for Specific Groups:**

- **Women and Poverty:** Direct financial interventions and skills development are crucial in lifting women out of poverty, especially in crisis situations.
- **Women and the Economy:** Empowering women with new skills and entrepreneurial capabilities directly contributes to economic recovery and growth.
- **Human Rights of Women:** Ensuring access to essential services like healthcare and economic support upholds women's rights during crises.
- **The Girl Child:** Maintaining educational and health services through innovations like telemedicine protects and supports the development of the girl child during disruptions.

These measures reflect a comprehensive approach to not only address the immediate challenges posed by the pandemic but also to lay down resilient, sustainable practices that reinforce gender equality in Somalia's long-term recovery and development strategy.

### 3.3. Freedom from Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes

#### 15. Over the past five years, which forms of gender-based violence, and in which specific contexts or settings, has your country prioritized for action?

Over the past five years, Somalia has prioritized several forms of gender-based violence (GBV), recognizing the unique vulnerabilities and threats faced by women and girls in different contexts. The focus has been particularly on violence exacerbated by conflict, traditional harmful practices, and the challenges within displacement settings. The prioritization of these areas reflects the complex interplay of cultural norms, ongoing conflict, and socio-economic factors in Somalia.

##### **I. Conflict-Related Sexual Violence:**

Somalia has placed significant emphasis on addressing sexual violence linked to ongoing conflicts. Conflict-related sexual violence remains a pressing issue due to the prolonged instability in the country, involving non-state armed groups and militias. This violence is used not only as a tool of war but also as a means of exerting control over populations, with women and girls being primary targets. The prioritization of this issue is a response to both its prevalence and its devastating impact on survivors, which includes physical trauma, psychological distress, and social stigma.

To combat this, Somalia has adopted various legislative and policy measures, including the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) on ending sexual violence in conflict. The plan focuses on creating robust legal frameworks, enhancing the capacity of security forces to prevent such violence, and establishing comprehensive support systems for survivors. Efforts include training the Somali police force to handle cases of sexual violence with sensitivity and establishing codes of conduct that emphasize the protection of women's rights.

In addition, the implementation of the Sexual Offences Bill/Rape Offence and Indecency Bill and the establishment of specialized services for survivors, such as healthcare, legal aid, and counseling, are part of a comprehensive strategy to provide justice and support to victims. These measures not only aim to provide immediate relief but also to build a legal and social framework that deters sexual violence and supports survivors in their recovery and reintegration into society.

##### **2. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child Marriage:**

Harmful traditional practices such as FGM and child marriage are prevalent across Somalia and are considered major forms of GBV that need urgent action. These practices are deeply rooted in cultural and social norms, affecting nearly all women in the country, with the majority undergoing FGM before the age of 15. Child marriage is also widespread, with many girls being married off before reaching adulthood, often to much older men, which exposes them to early childbearing and domestic violence.

Somalia's efforts to address these issues have involved legislative attempts, public awareness campaigns, and the involvement of religious and community leaders to change perceptions about these practices. The Somali Women's Charter and the national gender policy advocate for the elimination of FGM and child marriage, calling for stronger laws and community engagement to end these practices. However, despite these efforts, enforcement remains a significant challenge due to cultural resistance and the lack of a coherent legal framework.

### 3. GBV in Displacement Settings:

The large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Somalia, driven by conflict, drought, and famine, has created environments where women and girls are particularly vulnerable to GBV, including sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse. IDP camps, characterized by overcrowding, lack of privacy, and inadequate security, often see higher incidences of violence against women.

Recognizing this, Somalia has prioritized the protection of women and girls in these settings through various humanitarian and legal interventions. This includes establishing safe spaces and shelters, providing psychosocial support, and ensuring that essential services for GBV survivors are accessible and responsive. The National Action Plan emphasizes the need for comprehensive, survivor-centered services and has laid out strategies for creating and improving safe spaces, along with training service providers to offer appropriate care to survivors.<sup>3</sup>

### Lessons Learned and Broader Implications

The lessons learned from these initiatives highlight several key insights:

- **Community Involvement:** Effective GBV prevention and response require active participation from the entire community, including both men and women.
- **Integrated Approaches:** Addressing GBV requires a combination of legal, social, and economic strategies. Economic empowerment, education, and robust legal protections must be woven together to create comprehensive solutions.
- **Sustainability of Efforts:** Long-term commitment and consistent funding are crucial for the sustainability of GBV initiatives. Short-term projects can provide temporary relief, but lasting change requires persistent and integrated efforts.

### Focus on Specific Groups:

- **Women and Poverty:** Economic empowerment initiatives have been integrated with anti-violence programs, recognizing the link between economic dependency and vulnerability to GBV.
- **Women and the Economy:** Skills training and access to microfinance are part of broader strategies to empower women, aiming to reduce their economic vulnerability and dependence, which often correlates with exposure to GBV.
- **Human Rights of Women:** Legal reforms and international treaty ratifications (like CEDAW) underscore Somalia's commitment to improving women's rights.

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<sup>3</sup> Somali National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Somali Women's Charter and UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2021 – 2025).

- **The Girl Child:** Education and advocacy campaigns specifically target young girls to educate them on their rights and provide them with tools to protect themselves against GBV.

**Further Information:** The Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development often publishes updates on initiatives against domestic violence, available on their official platforms.

Somalia's targeted actions against GBV reflect a deep understanding of the complex dynamics that contribute to violence against women and girls. By prioritizing areas with the most immediate and severe impacts, the government aims to create safer, more equitable societal conditions that uphold the rights and dignity of all women and girls. These efforts, though challenging, are essential for the broader goals of peace, stability, and development in Somalia.

## **16. In the past five years, what actions has your country prioritized to address gender-based violence?**

Over the past five years, Somalia has taken decisive actions to address gender-based violence (GBV), recognizing its severe impact on the nation's social and economic development. The government, in collaboration with international organizations and local NGOs, has implemented a series of measures aimed at reducing GBV through legislative reform, community engagement, and support programs. These efforts reflect a holistic approach that targets not only immediate relief but also long-term societal changes to eliminate GBV. Here's an expanded view of these initiatives:

### **I. Legislative Reforms: The Sexual Offenses Bill**

Understanding that a robust legal framework is essential to combat GBV, Somalia has prioritized legislative reforms with the Sexual Offenses Bill/Rape Offence and Indecency Bill being a cornerstone. This bill aims to provide a comprehensive legal definition and stringent penalties for sexual offenses, thereby strengthening the judicial response to such crimes.

**Implementation and Scope:** The bill covers a wide range of offenses, establishing clear legal procedures for prosecuting cases of rape and sexual violence. This legislative clarity is crucial for law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, enhancing their capacity to deal with GBV effectively.

**Impact and Evaluation:** Since its introduction, there has been a notable increase in the reporting of rape and sexual offenses, suggesting that the legal framework has begun to impact public awareness and trust in the legal system. However, challenges remain in fully implementing the law, especially in remote areas where traditional norms still prevail.

**Broader Implications:** The legislation not only provides mechanisms for justice but also serves as a deterrent against potential offenders. It underscores the government's commitment to upholding the rights and safety of women and girls, aligning with international human rights standards.

## **2. National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence**

This comprehensive plan demonstrates Somalia's commitment to a coordinated approach in tackling GBV. It encompasses awareness campaigns to alter societal attitudes, educational programs to prevent violence, and the establishment of support systems for survivors.

**Implementation and Scope:** The action plan includes the development of educational materials, training for community leaders, and the establishment of safe houses and counseling services across the country. These measures are designed to work in tandem, addressing both the root causes and the consequences of GBV.

**Impact and Evaluation:** Feedback from communities indicates a growing awareness of GBV issues and more frequent discussions about gender equality. The availability of support services has also encouraged more survivors to come forward. However, sustaining funding and resources for these services remains a challenge.

**Broader Implications:** By changing community norms and providing support to survivors, the action plan not only addresses immediate needs but also works towards long-term cultural change. It emphasizes the importance of education and community involvement in eradicating GBV.

## **3. Economic Empowerment Programs**

Economic dependency is a significant factor in GBV. Recognizing this, Somalia has introduced several programs aimed at empowering women economically. These initiatives are intended to provide women with the skills and resources necessary to achieve financial independence, which in turn can reduce their vulnerability to violence.

**Implementation and Scope:** Programs include vocational training, access to microfinance, and entrepreneurship workshops. These are targeted at women in the most vulnerable communities, including displaced populations and those in rural areas.

**Impact and Evaluation:** Early reports suggest that participants in these programs have experienced enhanced economic status, which has contributed to reduced GBV incidents. Women who are economically independent are less likely to tolerate abusive situations due to financial necessity.

**Broader Implications:** These programs not only mitigate the immediate risk of GBV but also contribute to the broader economic strength of communities. Empowering women economically helps elevate their status in society, promoting gender equality more broadly.

### **Reflection on Specific Groups**

Each initiative is tailored to address the needs of specific groups:

- **Women and Poverty:** Direct financial assistance and empowerment programs help lift women out of poverty, reducing one of the key risk factors for GBV.
- **Women and the Economy:** By facilitating women's active participation in the economy, these programs help reshape societal views about gender roles and promote women's independence.

- Human Rights of Women: Legislative and action plans emphasize the protection of women's rights as fundamental to societal health and equality.
- The Girl Child: Protecting young girls through education and legal measures ensures they grow up in a safer environment, reducing the likelihood of GBV and providing them with opportunities to succeed.

In conclusion, Somalia's multifaceted approach to combating GBV over the past five years shows a significant shift towards prioritizing gender equality and women's safety. These efforts, while still facing challenges, lay a strong foundation for ongoing and future initiatives to eradicate GBV in Somali society.

## **17. In the past five years, what strategies has your country used to prevent gender-based violence?**

Over the past five years, Somalia has implemented several strategies to prevent gender-based violence (GBV). These strategies are part of a broader commitment to improving the safety, rights, and well-being of women and girls in the country, particularly in conflict-affected and humanitarian settings. The primary strategies include establishing comprehensive national action plans, targeted programs to address specific forms of violence, and collaborative initiatives involving various stakeholders. Below are three concrete examples of Somalia's strategies to prevent GBV.

### **I. National Strategy to End Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) (2024-2029)**

Somalia's National Strategy to End VAWG is a comprehensive plan that seeks to address the various forms of violence against women and girls. The strategy is based on a vision where all women and girls in Somalia can live free from violence. It focuses on strengthening legislative frameworks and institutional mechanisms to effectively prevent, protect from, and respond to violence in both public and private spaces.

**Aims and Scope:** The strategy aims to tackle the root causes of GBV, including patriarchal attitudes, discriminatory practices, and norms. It also seeks to enhance service delivery, confront structural barriers, and challenge discriminatory norms by working directly with individuals and institutions that influence societal practices.

**Target Population:** The strategy targets women and girls across Somalia, including those in rural areas, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and other vulnerable groups who are most at risk of experiencing GBV.

**Budget and Funding:** Implementation of the strategy is supported through national budget allocations, with additional funding from international partners and agencies committed to gender equality and women's rights.



Impact Evaluations: Early stages of implementation emphasize a multi-faceted approach involving policymakers, justice providers, and essential service providers. This approach is designed to ensure that survivors receive timely, comprehensive, and high-quality services.<sup>4</sup>

## **2. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEAH) Prevention and Response Action Plan (2023)**

The Ministry of Finance's SEAH Action Plan focuses specifically on addressing issues of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. This initiative is part of a broader effort to ensure safe and equitable environments within government institutions and other workplaces.

**Aims and Scope:** The SEAH Action Plan aims to establish clear protocols for handling complaints related to sexual exploitation and harassment. It includes staff training, development of reporting procedures, appointment of SEAH focal points, and implementation of workplace policies and codes of conduct.

**Target Population:** The primary focus is on employees within government institutions, ensuring a safe work environment for all, particularly women who are at higher risk of experiencing SEAH.

**Budget and Funding:** The action plan is funded through the Ministry of Finance, with support from international donors and organizations that specialize in gender-based violence prevention and workplace safety.

**Impact Evaluations:** While comprehensive evaluations are ongoing, initial feedback suggests increased awareness of SEAH issues and a stronger commitment to creating safer workplace environments. The plan has also led to the establishment of complaint channels and training programs.<sup>5</sup>

## **3. Community-Based GBV Prevention Programs**

Somalia has also implemented various community-based programs to prevent GBV, which focus on raising awareness and changing attitudes toward gender-based violence. These programs often involve partnerships between government agencies, NGOs, and local communities.

**Aims and Scope:** These programs aim to educate communities about the harmful effects of GBV, promote gender equality, and provide support to survivors. Activities include workshops, public awareness campaigns, and community dialogues to engage both men and women in the fight against GBV.

**Target Population:** The programs target communities across Somalia, with a particular focus on rural areas and IDP camps where GBV rates are higher. They involve local leaders, elders, women's groups, and youth to ensure a broad base of support and understanding.

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<sup>4</sup> "National Strategy to End Violence Against Women and Girls 2024 – 2029", The Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development, Federal Government of Somalia (May 2024)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

**Budget and Funding:** Community-based programs are typically funded by a combination of national government resources and international aid, including contributions from UN agencies and international NGOs committed to ending GBV.

**Impact Evaluations:** These programs have helped to increase community awareness of GBV and the importance of gender equality. Surveys and assessments indicate that community members are more likely to speak out against GBV and support survivors, suggesting a positive shift in attitudes and behaviors.<sup>6</sup>

### **Actions for Specific Groups**

- **Women and Poverty:** Direct financial assistance and economic empowerment programs help alleviate poverty and reduce vulnerability to GBV.
- **Women and the Economy:** Supporting women’s integration into the economy through skills training and entrepreneurship not only boosts economic growth but also empowers women, reducing their GBV risk.
- **Human Rights of Women:** Strengthening the legal framework and ensuring access to justice for women are fundamental to protecting their human rights.
- **The Girl Child:** Educational programs aimed at the girl child not only focus on reducing their vulnerability to GBV but also emphasize their rights and the importance of their safety and well-being.

Through these strategies, Somalia continues to work toward creating a safer environment for women and girls, aiming to eradicate gender-based violence and promote gender equality across all sectors of society.

## **18. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (e.g. online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?**

In the past five years, Somalia has recognized the growing threat of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), including online sexual harassment, stalking, and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. As the country experiences increased internet penetration and digital connectivity, the risks associated with these forms of violence have become more pronounced. To address these challenges, Somalia has implemented several measures to prevent and respond to TFGBV, focusing on raising awareness, strengthening legal frameworks, and enhancing the capacity of relevant institutions to handle such cases. Below are three concrete examples of actions taken by Somalia to combat TFGBV.<sup>7</sup>

### **I. Development of the National Cybersecurity Strategy**

**Aims and Scope:** The Somali government, recognizing the importance of safeguarding its citizens in the digital age, developed a National Cybersecurity Strategy. This strategy includes specific

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<sup>6</sup> “National Strategy to End Violence Against Women and Girls 2024 – 2029”, The Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development, Federal Government of Somalia (May 2024)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

provisions to address TFGBV, such as online sexual harassment, stalking, and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The strategy aims to create a safe and secure online environment by establishing legal frameworks, promoting digital literacy, and implementing cybersecurity measures that protect against online abuse and exploitation.

**Target Population:** The strategy targets all Somali internet users, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, including women, girls, and individuals with disabilities. By creating a safer online space, the strategy seeks to protect those most at risk of TFGBV.

**Budget and Funding:** The National Cybersecurity Strategy is funded through a combination of national resources and international assistance. Key partners include international organizations specializing in cybersecurity and digital rights, which provide financial support, technical expertise, and capacity-building programs.

**Impact Evaluations:** While the strategy is still in its early stages, initial evaluations indicate increased awareness about cybersecurity risks and the importance of protecting personal information online. Training programs for law enforcement and judicial officers on handling TFGBV cases have begun, and public awareness campaigns are being planned to educate citizens about online safety and how to report cybercrimes.

**Lessons Learned:** One significant lesson learned is the need for continuous public education and awareness-raising to ensure that citizens understand the risks associated with digital interactions. Moreover, there is a need to strengthen coordination among government agencies, internet service providers, and civil society organizations to effectively address TFGBV.

## **2. Establishment of Dedicated Cybercrime Units within Law Enforcement**

**Aims and Scope:** To better respond to incidents of TFGBV, Somalia has established dedicated cybercrime units within its law enforcement agencies. These units are tasked with investigating and prosecuting cases of online harassment, stalking, and the unauthorized sharing of intimate images. The aim is to enhance the capacity of law enforcement to handle cybercrimes effectively and provide victims with timely and appropriate support.

**Target Population:** These units serve all victims of cybercrime, with a particular emphasis on supporting women, girls, and other vulnerable groups who may be targeted for TFGBV. The units work closely with community organizations and service providers to ensure comprehensive support for survivors.

**Budget and Funding:** Funding for the establishment and operation of cybercrime units comes from the national budget, with additional support from international partners. Organizations such as Interpol and UNODC have provided training and resources to equip Somali law enforcement with the necessary skills to combat cybercrime.

**Impact Evaluations:** Since their establishment, these units have seen an increase in the reporting and investigation of TFGBV cases. While challenges remain, such as limited resources and

technological infrastructure, the presence of dedicated cybercrime units has raised public confidence in the authorities' ability to address online violence.

Lessons Learned: Key lessons include the importance of specialized training for law enforcement personnel to handle TFGBV cases effectively. The need for public awareness campaigns to encourage reporting and provide information on available support services has also been highlighted.

### **3. Public Awareness Campaigns on Digital Safety and TFGBV**

Aims and Scope: Public awareness campaigns have been launched to educate Somali citizens about the dangers of TFGBV and how to protect themselves online. These campaigns focus on digital safety, the responsible use of social media, and the rights of individuals to privacy and protection from online abuse. They aim to empower individuals, especially women and girls, to use digital tools safely and to know their rights and how to seek help if they experience online violence.

Target Population: The campaigns target the general public, with specific messaging aimed at women, girls, and individuals with disabilities who are more likely to be affected by TFGBV. Educational institutions, community centers, and media outlets are key venues for these campaigns.

Budget and Funding: Funding for these campaigns is provided by a mix of government resources and international support from organizations that advocate for digital rights and gender equality. NGOs, such as those focused on women's rights and child protection, are also key partners in these initiatives.

Impact Evaluations: Initial feedback from these campaigns indicates that there is growing awareness of TFGBV issues among the public. Many individuals have reported feeling more informed about their rights and the steps they can take to protect themselves online. However, continuous efforts are needed to reach more remote and rural communities.

Lessons Learned: The campaigns have highlighted the importance of using multiple platforms and methods to reach diverse audiences effectively. Engaging local influencers and community leaders has proven effective in spreading the message. Additionally, ensuring the availability of support services for victims is crucial for the success of these awareness efforts.

#### **Broader Implications for Targeted Groups**

- **Women and Poverty:** Economic vulnerabilities can exacerbate the impacts of online GBV. Initiatives to improve economic conditions for women also focus on enhancing their digital literacy and access to online resources.
- **Women and the Economy:** Safe participation in the digital economy is crucial. Legislative protections and educational programs are designed to ensure women can engage economically online without fear of harassment or abuse.
- **Human Rights of Women:** Protecting women's rights in digital spaces is an extension of broader human rights initiatives. It's crucial that women's rights to privacy and safety are upheld online just as they are offline.

- The Girl Child: Special emphasis is placed on protecting young girls by integrating digital safety into educational curriculums from an early age, preparing them to navigate the digital world with awareness and caution.

These measures demonstrate Somalia's commitment to addressing the growing issue of TFGBV. By strengthening legal frameworks, building institutional capacity, and raising public awareness, Somalia aims to create a safer digital environment for all its citizens, particularly the most vulnerable groups. Continued efforts, supported by both national and international resources, are essential to sustain and expand these initiatives.

### **19. In the past five years, what measures has your country taken to resource women's organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV?**

In recent years, Somalia has recognized the pivotal role of women's organizations in both preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV). Supporting these organizations financially and structurally has been a key aspect of the government's strategy to combat GBV effectively. Here's a detailed look at the measures Somalia has taken to resource these organizations:

#### **1. Direct Funding and Grants**

The Somali government, often in partnership with international donors, has provided direct funding and grants to women's organizations that focus on combating GBV. This funding is intended to support a range of activities from awareness campaigns and community workshops to legal aid and counseling services for survivors. These funds target a broad spectrum of women's organizations, particularly those with a proven track record in effectively addressing GBV at the community level. While exact amounts can vary based on the scope of the projects and the size of the organizations, significant funds have been allocated through international partnerships. For example, collaborations with agencies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union have bolstered the financial resources available to these organizations. Evaluations of these funding initiatives often show that increased financial resources correlate with an enhanced capacity to reach and support victims of GBV. Organizations have reported being able to expand their services, such as setting up more comprehensive support systems for survivors, including shelters and 24/7 helplines. One critical lesson has been the need for sustainable funding models. Dependency on international donors is seen as precarious, and there is a growing emphasis on developing local funding streams to ensure the longevity and independence of these initiatives.

#### **2. Capacity Building and Training Programs**

Beyond direct financial support, Somalia has invested in capacity-building programs designed to enhance the effectiveness of women's organizations by providing training in areas such as legal advocacy, psychological counseling, and crisis management. These programs specifically target staff and volunteers within women's organizations across the country, with an emphasis on organizations operating in underserved or high-risk areas. Funding for these training programs is typically included as part of broader support packages from international NGOs and government initiatives aimed at strengthening civil society in Somalia. Feedback from participants has

highlighted an improvement in service delivery and an increased ability to handle complex cases of GBV. Organizations have also noted better retention rates of trained staff and a higher level of professional satisfaction due to enhanced skills and knowledge. Continuous training and adaptability to emerging GBV trends are crucial for maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of these organizations.

### **3. Networking and Coalition Building**

Recognizing the power of collective action, Somalia has encouraged and facilitated the formation of networks and coalitions among women's organizations working on GBV. These networks aim to share resources, standardize response protocols, and advocate collectively for policy changes. All GBV-focused women's organizations and related stakeholders are encouraged to participate in these networks. While direct funding for coalition activities is often minimal, the government and its partners sometimes sponsor events, conferences, and meetings that serve to build and strengthen these networks. These coalitions have successfully amplified the voice of women's organizations in policy discussions and have led to more coordinated responses to GBV across different regions. Unity and collaboration among organizations can significantly enhance advocacy efforts and lead to more effective policy changes at the national level.

These measures are part of a broader national strategy adopted in May 2024, aimed at ending violence against women and girls in Somalia from 2024 to 2029. The strategy emphasizes a holistic approach involving legal reform, community engagement, and enhanced service provision to tackle the root causes and consequences of GBV.<sup>8</sup>

**Further Information:** Details on the funding programs and their impacts can often be found in the annual reports of the Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development or on the websites of the respective donor organizations.

## **20. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media, including social media?**

Over the past five years, Somalia has embarked on a series of comprehensive initiatives aimed at transforming the media's portrayal of women and girls. This effort seeks to address and diminish the deeply ingrained discrimination and gender biases in both traditional and modern media platforms. The initiatives are multifaceted, each targeting different aspects of media practice and its influence on public perceptions of gender roles. Here's an expanded look at these key initiatives:

### **I. Media Guidelines and Sensitivity Training**

The Somali government, in collaboration with international organizations, has developed and disseminated guidelines designed to educate media practitioners on portraying women and girls responsibly. The primary goal of these guidelines is to minimize discriminatory content and promote representations that are both respectful and balanced. Complementing these guidelines,

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<sup>8</sup> "National Strategy to End Violence Against Women and Girls 2024 – 2029", The Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development, Federal Government of Somalia (May 2024).

sensitivity training sessions are held for journalists, editors, broadcasters, and social media influencers to deepen their understanding of gender issues and the impact of their work.

- **Funding and Implementation:** These programs are typically funded through international collaborations with agencies like UNESCO, which provide both financial and technical support.
- **Impact:** The initial impact has been promising, with a notable increase in the awareness of gender biases among media professionals. Anecdotal evidence from media houses suggests that more organizations are beginning to integrate these guidelines into their editorial policies and daily reporting.
- **Challenges and Lessons:** One of the primary lessons learned is the necessity of ongoing training and re-evaluation to ensure that these changes in media practice are sustainable. Furthermore, engaging higher-level management within media organizations, including media owners and policymakers, has been identified as crucial for securing a long-term commitment to these guidelines.

## 2. Public Awareness Campaigns on Gender Equality

To combat gender stereotypes and promote equality more broadly within Somali society, the government has rolled out several high-profile public awareness campaigns. These campaigns are designed to challenge traditional norms and showcase the contributions of women in various sectors of society. They utilize television, radio, online platforms, and print media to reach a wide audience.

- **Scope and Reach:** The campaigns specifically aim to engage both men and women across all demographics, including those in more remote or traditionally conservative areas.
- **Funding:** This initiative is primarily funded by the Somali government with additional support from international donors committed to human rights and gender equality.
- **Impact and Evaluation:** Early evaluations suggest that these campaigns have successfully influenced public attitudes, with more individuals reporting a better understanding of and commitment to gender equality.
- **Challenges and Lessons:** The effectiveness of these campaigns often hinges on the use of local languages and culturally relevant content. Partnerships with local leaders and community groups have proven essential in amplifying the reach and acceptance of the campaign messages.

## 3. Support for Women-Led Media Initiatives

Recognizing the need to empower women within the media industry itself, the government and various non-governmental organizations have supported the creation and operation of women-led media initiatives. These initiatives provide training and resources for aspiring female journalists and fund projects that highlight women's issues.

- **Target Audience:** The primary beneficiaries are women journalists, media students, and content creators.
- **Funding:** Support for these initiatives often comes from international bodies that advocate for media freedom and gender equality, as well as private foundations.
- **Impact:** These initiatives have been instrumental in increasing the presence of women in the media field in Somalia. They have also improved the quality of reporting on issues that affect women, ensuring that these topics receive the attention they deserve.

- **Challenges and Lessons:** A key takeaway is that supporting women in media not only changes the narrative around gender but also ensures that women are active participants in shaping public discourse.

These efforts collectively represent Somalia's proactive approach to altering the media landscape to foster a more gender-inclusive society. The government's commitment to these initiatives indicates a strategic recognition of the power of media to shape societal norms and values regarding gender.

**Further Information:** Further information, updates, detailed reports, and campaign materials on these initiatives can be accessed through the websites of the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, and the involved NGOs and participating media outlets.

## 21. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken specifically tailored to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls?

Addressing violence against marginalized groups of women and girls in Somalia has become an increasingly important focus over the past five years. The Somali government, in collaboration with various international and local NGOs, has developed targeted programs to address the specific vulnerabilities and challenges faced by these groups. Here's a more detailed discussion on the initiatives taken to protect internally displaced persons (IDPs), women with disabilities, and women from minority clans:

### I. Protection Initiatives for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Refugee Women

**In-Depth Scope and Implementation:** Recognizing that displacement significantly increases vulnerability to GBV, Somalia has implemented specific measures within IDP and refugee camps. These measures include the enhancement of security within camps, which involves increased lighting, the deployment of trained security personnel, and the strategic design of living spaces to maximize safety for women and girls. Additionally, educational programs aimed at both residents and security forces focus on recognizing, preventing, and responding to instances of GBV.

**Targeted Training and Awareness:** Training programs for camp staff and security personnel are crucial to these initiatives. These programs emphasize the importance of gender sensitivity and provide practical guidelines on how to handle GBV incidents effectively and compassionately.

**Budget and Collaborative Funding:** The initiatives are supported financially through collaborations between the Somali government and international humanitarian organizations, which provide both funding and logistical support. While specific budget figures are often not publicly disclosed, the funding is substantial, reflecting the priority given to these protective measures.

**Impact and Continuous Assessment:** The impact of these initiatives is monitored through regular surveys and feedback mechanisms involving the camp residents. Reports indicate a decrease in



GBV incidents and an improvement in how such incidents are handled, though challenges like underreporting and trust in authorities remain significant.

## **2. Support Programs for Women with Disabilities**

**Specialized Programs and Accessibility:** Programs for women with disabilities take a two-pronged approach: direct support and systemic change. Direct support includes specialized counseling services, which are accessible physically and communication-wise, catering to various disabilities. Systemic changes involve modifying physical infrastructure and service protocols in health facilities, police stations, and legal services to be more accessible to individuals with disabilities.

**Community and Caregiver Engagement:** Engagement initiatives educate caregivers and the broader community on the rights and needs of disabled women, aiming to change societal attitudes and reduce stigma. These programs also provide legal education to women with disabilities, empowering them to advocate for their rights.

**Resource Allocation and Effectiveness:** These programs are typically funded by a mix of state budgets and specific grants from organizations focused on disability rights. Effectiveness is gauged by the increased use of services by disabled women and feedback on their experiences with these improved services.

## **3. Empowerment and Protection for Minority Clan Women**

**Culturally Tailored Outreach:** Understanding the complex social dynamics within Somalia, initiatives aimed at minority clan women are carefully designed to respect cultural sensitivities while promoting gender equality. These include community dialogues facilitated by respected local figures who advocate for the rights and protection of women and girls.

**Economic and Legal Empowerment:** Economic empowerment programs provide skills training and microfinance opportunities tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of minority clan women. Legal aid is made available to help women navigate the challenges of seeking justice for GBV in a context where they may face systemic discrimination.

**Monitoring and Lessons Learned:** The effectiveness of these programs is continually assessed through community feedback and participation rates. One key lesson has been the critical importance of community involvement in designing and implementing initiatives to ensure they are both accepted and effective.

These initiatives demonstrate Somalia's commitment to addressing the needs of the most vulnerable women and girls in its society. By focusing on tailored, context-sensitive programs, Somalia aims to create safer, more equitable environments where all women and girls have the opportunity to live free from violence and discrimination.

**Further Information and Documentation:** Progress reports and detailed evaluations of these programs can typically be found through the Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development and the websites of involved NGOs and international partners.

### 3.3 Participation, Accountability and Gender-Responsive Institutions

#### 22. In the past five years, what actions and measures has your country to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?

In the last five years, Somalia has intensified its efforts to promote an inclusive environment where women can actively participate in public life and decision-making. These initiatives are part of a broader commitment to ensure gender equality and empower all segments of the population. Here are three concrete examples of these initiatives:

##### **I. Adoption of the National Gender Policy**

**Strategic Focus:** The adoption of the National Gender Policy in 2019 marks a pivotal step towards institutionalizing gender equality in Somalia. This policy not only aims to eliminate discrimination but also to create equitable opportunities for women in all aspects of public life, including political, social, and economic spheres. It sets out clear objectives and strategies to integrate women into the governance processes and ensure their perspectives are included in policy-making.

**Implementation and Outreach:** The policy's implementation involves collaboration across multiple levels of government and partnerships with international organizations. Training sessions, seminars, and workshops have been conducted to educate government officials and community leaders about the policy's objectives and the importance of gender inclusion.

**Challenges and Progress:** While progress is evident in increased dialogue and some policy adjustments favoring gender equality, challenges persist in fully implementing the policy, particularly in remote and conservative areas where traditional views on gender roles are deeply entrenched.

##### **2. Legislative Quotas for Women's Representation**

**Policy Implementation:** The legislative quota system requiring at least 30% female representation in all elected and appointed governmental bodies is a concrete measure to ensure women have a voice in decision-making. This quota is enforced during electoral processes and in appointments to government positions.

**Support and Development:** To support this quota system, Somalia has initiated several development programs aimed at preparing women for leadership roles. These include leadership training tailored for women, which focuses on building political skills, public speaking, and electoral campaigning.

**Evaluating Effectiveness:** Though the quota has not always been met, its presence has significantly increased the number of women in politics compared to five years ago. This increase has brought women's issues to the forefront of political discussions and has slowly begun to change the legislative landscape in favor of more gender-sensitive policies.

### **3. Programs for Women's Leadership and Capacity Building**

**Comprehensive Training Programs:** Recognizing that access to education and professional development is crucial for effective leadership, Somalia has rolled out extensive training programs for women. These programs are designed not just to build skills but also to empower women to seek and assume leadership positions across various sectors.

**Collaborative Efforts:** These training programs are often conducted in collaboration with NGOs and international agencies that specialize in leadership development and women's empowerment. They provide a platform for Somali women to learn from global best practices and network with leaders from other countries.

**Sustainability and Impact:** Feedback from program participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with many women reporting enhanced skills and increased opportunities for advancement. The programs have also fostered a supportive network among women leaders, encouraging mentorship and collaboration.

#### **Actions for Specific Groups:**

- **Women in Power and Decision-Making:** Beyond quotas and training, ongoing support and recognition of women leaders are crucial to maintaining their presence and influence in governance.
- **Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women:** Strengthening institutions that focus on women's rights and development ensures that gains in gender equality are preserved and advanced.
- **Human Rights of Women:** Advocacy and legal reforms continue to be essential in protecting and enhancing women's human rights in Somalia.
- **Women and the Media:** Encouraging positive portrayal of women in the media and supporting female journalists and media professionals are ongoing efforts.
- **The Girl Child:** Education initiatives target young girls to ensure they grow up with awareness of their rights and opportunities, setting the foundation for the next generation of female leaders.

Through these multifaceted efforts, Somalia is striving to create a more balanced and inclusive society where women have equal opportunities to contribute to and benefit from all aspects of public and political life. While challenges remain, the commitment to these initiatives signals a significant shift towards greater gender equality in Somali society.

### **23. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?**

Over the past five years, Somalia has implemented several initiatives to increase women's representation and participation in media and ICT, focusing on leadership roles and decision-making. These initiatives are part of broader efforts to empower women and promote gender equality in all spheres of society. Here are three concrete examples of the actions taken:

1. **Training Programs for Women in Media and ICT:** Somalia has introduced training programs to empower women with skills in journalism, digital media, and ICT. These programs aim to increase women's participation in media and ICT sectors, enabling them to contribute more effectively to public discourse. The training includes workshops on journalism, digital marketing, coding, and gender-sensitive reporting. These programs target young women, university graduates, and those in media, particularly from marginalized communities. Funded by government and international partners like UNESCO and UN Women, early evaluations show increased female participation in media, improved leadership roles, and higher quality of gender-sensitive content. Ongoing support through mentorship and partnerships with media companies is critical for sustaining these gains.
2. **Advocacy Campaigns for Gender-Sensitive Media Policies:** Somalia has launched campaigns to promote gender-sensitive media policies, addressing gender biases in media organizations. These campaigns encourage equitable hiring practices, inclusive decision-making, and fair representation of women in media content. Activities include public seminars, workshops with media executives, and the creation of gender-sensitive reporting guidelines. Targeting media professionals and policymakers, these campaigns have led to some media organizations adopting internal policies that support gender equality. Funding comes from both governmental sources and international partners focused on press freedom and gender equality.
3. **Digital Platforms for Women's Participation:** To amplify women's voices in public discourse, Somalia has supported the development of digital platforms that provide safe spaces for women to share their views and engage in decision-making. These platforms feature blogs, discussion forums, and social media channels covering topics like health, education, and political participation. Accessible via mobile phones, they aim to reach women across all regions, including rural areas. Supported by international donors and local NGOs, these platforms have seen high engagement, helping women raise awareness on local issues, advocate for policy changes, and support women candidates in elections. Ensuring accessibility and safeguarding users from online harassment are key challenges for these platforms.

#### **Actions for Specific Groups:**

- **Women in Power and Decision-Making:** These initiatives aim to not only increase the number of women in media and ICT but also to empower them to take on leadership roles within these sectors, influencing public opinion and policy.
- **Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women:** The initiatives are part of a broader framework that includes institutional support for gender equality and the establishment of formal bodies that advocate for women's rights.
- **Human Rights of Women:** The focus on fair representation and participation in media aligns with the broader agenda of protecting and promoting women's human rights.
- **Women and the Media:** Specific programs are designed to train and support women media professionals, ensuring they have the skills and opportunities to succeed.

- The Girl Child: Efforts to introduce digital literacy at an early age are part of the strategy to prepare young girls for future careers in media and ICT, ensuring that the next generation of women is well-equipped to participate in these fields.

These initiatives demonstrate Somalia's commitment to increasing women's representation and participation in media, ICT, and public discourse, fostering a more inclusive society where women can actively contribute to and influence public policies and narratives.

**24. Please describe your country's current national women's machinery (government entity exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women) and describe the measures that your country taken over the past five years to establish and/or strengthen it.**

### **Somalia's National Women's Machinery: The Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development**

**Overview and Mandate:** The primary entity dedicated to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in Somalia is the Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development (MoFHRD). Established in 2012, the Ministry is tasked with developing policies, coordinating programs, and implementing initiatives that focus on the advancement of women's rights, gender equality, and the protection of vulnerable populations. The Ministry's mandate includes advocacy for women's rights, policy formulation, and the integration of gender considerations across all government sectors.

#### **Mandate and Functions:**

- **Policy Formulation and Implementation:** The MoFHRD is responsible for drafting, promoting, and implementing policies that support gender equality and women's empowerment. This includes creating action plans to combat gender-based violence, improving women's access to education and healthcare, and increasing women's participation in public life and decision-making.
- **Coordination and Collaboration:** The Ministry coordinates with other governmental departments, NGOs, and international organizations to integrate gender considerations into all aspects of governance and development programs.
- **Advocacy and Awareness:** The MoFHRD conducts advocacy campaigns to raise awareness about women's rights and gender issues. It works to change societal attitudes towards women and address cultural norms that perpetuate gender discrimination.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The Ministry is tasked with monitoring the implementation of gender equality policies and programs, ensuring they are effective and meet the needs of Somali women.

### **Evolution of the National Machinery for Gender Equality**

The evolution of Somalia's national machinery for gender equality has been a gradual process, shaped by both internal developments and international support:

- I. **Initial Establishment and Challenges:** Initially set up in 2012, the Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development faced significant challenges, including limited funding, lack of

technical expertise, and the broader instability of the Somali state. Despite these challenges, the Ministry has served as a central advocate for women's rights, pushing for legislative reforms and supporting women's organizations.

2. **Strengthening and Expansion (2015-2019):** During this period, the Ministry saw an expansion in its mandate and activities, partly due to increased international support and a growing recognition of the importance of gender equality for national development. The MoFHRD started to play a more significant role in drafting key policies, such as the National Gender Policy and action plans to combat gender-based violence.
3. **Recent Developments (2019-2024):** In the past five years, the Ministry has taken several steps to further establish and strengthen its role:
  - **Adoption of the National Gender Policy:** This policy has provided a comprehensive framework for promoting gender equality and has been a cornerstone of the Ministry's efforts.
  - **Increased Collaboration:** The Ministry has intensified its collaboration with other government bodies, international donors, and NGOs to enhance the implementation of gender-focused programs.
  - **Capacity Building:** Efforts have been made to improve the technical capacity of the Ministry's staff through training and development programs. This has enabled the Ministry to more effectively design, implement, and monitor gender equality initiatives.
  - **Resource Mobilization:** The MoFHRD has actively sought to increase its funding, both from the national budget and through international grants. While budget constraints remain a significant issue, these efforts have provided the Ministry with more resources to carry out its mandate.

### **Current Location within Government and Budget**

**Location within Government:** The Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development is a standalone ministry within the Somali government. It operates at the national level and coordinates with regional administrations to implement its programs and policies.

**Current Budget:** While specific budget figures are often not publicly detailed, the budget allocation for the MoFHRD has seen gradual increases as part of broader commitments to support gender equality. As a proportion of total government spending, funding for gender equality initiatives remains relatively modest, reflecting broader fiscal constraints within the Somali government. Efforts to increase the Ministry's budget have included:

- **National Budget Allocations:** The Ministry receives a portion of the national budget, which is allocated annually. This funding is primarily used for administrative costs, program implementation, and policy development.
- **International Donor Support:** A significant portion of the Ministry's operational funding comes from international donors. Organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, and various NGOs provide financial and technical support to bolster the Ministry's efforts.

## Measures to Strengthen the National Machinery

Over the past five years, several specific measures have been taken to strengthen the Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development:

1. **Capacity Building Initiatives:** Training programs have been implemented to enhance the skills of the Ministry's staff. These programs focus on areas such as policy development, gender analysis, project management, and advocacy. Capacity building has also included strengthening the Ministry's ability to collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data, which is crucial for effective policymaking.
2. **Increased Advocacy and Partnerships:** The Ministry has intensified its advocacy efforts, working closely with civil society organizations, women's groups, and international partners to promote gender equality. These partnerships have been instrumental in raising awareness, mobilizing resources, and implementing joint initiatives.
3. **Policy Development and Legal Reforms:** The Ministry has played a key role in the development of key policies, such as the National Gender Policy, and in advocating for legal reforms that protect and promote women's rights. These efforts have contributed to the establishment of a more robust legal and policy framework for gender equality in Somalia.

The MoFHRD serves as Somalia's national machinery for gender equality, with a mandate to promote women's rights and gender equality across all aspects of public and private life. Despite facing significant challenges, including limited funding and capacity constraints, the Ministry has made notable progress in advocating for women's rights, developing key policies, and collaborating with national and international partners to implement gender-focused programs. Moving forward, continued efforts to increase funding, build capacity, and strengthen partnerships will be crucial for the Ministry to fulfill its mandate and achieve its goals of gender equality and women's empowerment in Somalia.

**25. In the past five years, what other mechanisms and tools has your country used to mainstream gender equality across sectors?** (e.g. gender focal points in the Executive, Legislature or Judiciary; inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms; gender audits, consultations with women's organizations)

In the past five years, Somalia has actively worked to mainstream gender equality across various sectors, recognizing its importance for sustainable development and peace. To achieve this, specific mechanisms and tools have been implemented to integrate gender perspectives into government operations and society.

1. **Establishment of Gender Focal Points Across Government Ministries:** Somalia has appointed gender focal points in each government ministry to ensure gender issues are considered in policy formulation, program implementation, and budgeting. These focal points advocate for gender-sensitive policies, organize training sessions, and monitor progress on gender mainstreaming. Their work indirectly benefits the entire Somali population by promoting inclusive and equitable government services. Funded by ministry budgets and supported by international organizations like UN Women, these roles have

increased awareness of gender issues and led to the inclusion of gender-specific goals in strategic plans.

2. **Inter-Ministerial Coordination Mechanisms on Gender Equality:** To ensure a unified approach to gender equality, Somalia has established coordination mechanisms involving regular meetings and joint planning between ministries, coordinated by the Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development. These mechanisms integrate gender equality into national development strategies and ensure consistent implementation across sectors. Funded by the government and supported by international partners, these efforts have improved the alignment of gender equality initiatives and facilitated resource sharing, making gender mainstreaming more effective.
3. **Gender Audits and Consultations with Women's Organizations:** Somalia uses gender audits and consultations with women's organizations to evaluate the effectiveness of its gender equality initiatives. These audits assess the integration of gender considerations into government programs, while consultations gather direct input from women on gender policies. Supported by national budgets and international funding, these activities have led to more inclusive policies that better address the needs of women and girls. Regular audits and open consultations are essential for accountability and ensuring policies are responsive to real-world needs.

#### **Specific Actions for Targeted Groups:**

- **Women in Power and Decision-Making:** These mechanisms support the inclusion of women's perspectives in all areas of governance, promoting gender-balanced decision-making.
- **Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women:** The establishment of gender focal points and inter-ministerial coordination strengthens the institutional framework for gender equality.
- **Human Rights of Women:** Gender audits and consultations help ensure that women's rights are respected and promoted in all government policies and programs.
- **Women and the Media:** Engaging the media in gender equality initiatives promotes fair and balanced representation of women and highlights their contributions to society.
- **The Girl Child:** Focusing on girls' education and protection from violence ensures that the rights of the girl child are prioritized, providing a foundation for their future empowerment.

These mechanisms highlight Somalia's commitment to mainstreaming gender equality across all sectors, recognizing that an integrated and coordinated approach is essential to achieving true gender equality and empowering women and girls. Through these initiatives, Somalia aims to build a more inclusive society where the rights and opportunities of women and girls are fully realized.

**26. If there is a national human rights institution in your country, what measures has it taken to address violations of women's rights and promote gender equality?**



In Somalia, the Somali Independent Human Rights Commission (SIHRC) serves as the national human rights institution, playing a pivotal role in addressing violations of women's rights and promoting gender equality. Over the past five years, the SIHRC has implemented various measures aimed at improving the status of women, protecting their rights, and ensuring their voices are heard in national discussions on human rights. These measures have focused on monitoring and reporting, advocating for legal reforms, and conducting educational and awareness campaigns, all of which are integral to advancing gender equality in Somalia. Here are three concrete examples of measures taken by the SIHRC to address violations of women's rights and promote gender equality:

### **I. Monitoring and Reporting on Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

One of the core functions of the SIHRC has been its focus on monitoring and reporting instances of gender-based violence (GBV). By conducting thorough investigations into allegations of GBV, the SIHRC collects data and documents cases to provide a clear picture of the prevalence and nature of such violence in Somalia. This information is crucial for holding perpetrators accountable and pushing for systemic changes. The Commission's monitoring activities often involve collaboration with local law enforcement, healthcare providers, and community leaders to ensure that cases of GBV are identified and addressed. Through its reports, the SIHRC highlights the challenges faced by victims, such as underreporting due to fear of stigma or retaliation, and offers recommendations to the government on how to improve the response to GBV. These reports have been instrumental in influencing government policy and encouraging the development of targeted action plans to combat GBV, thereby enhancing the protection of women and girls in Somalia.

### **2. Advocacy for Legal Reforms to Protect Women's Rights**

In addition to monitoring and reporting, the SIHRC has been a vocal advocate for legal reforms that protect women's rights and promote gender equality. The Commission has actively lobbied for the adoption and implementation of laws that address various forms of discrimination and violence against women. This includes advocating for the passage of the Sexual Offenses Bill, which seeks to establish clear legal definitions and penalties for sexual violence and harassment. The SIHRC works closely with legislators, government officials, and international partners to ensure that national laws align with international human rights standards. By providing evidence-based recommendations and engaging in persistent advocacy, the SIHRC has been able to influence the legislative process, ensuring that women's rights are protected under the law. The Commission's efforts have helped create a legal framework that supports the rights and dignity of women, addressing issues such as property rights, inheritance laws, and protection from harmful practices like female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

### **3. Educational and Awareness Campaigns on Women's Rights**

Educational and awareness campaigns are another significant component of the SIHRC's efforts to promote gender equality and protect women's rights. These campaigns are designed to inform the public about the importance of gender equality and the legal rights of women. By raising awareness about issues such as GBV, discrimination, and the importance of women's participation

in decision-making, the SIHRC aims to change societal attitudes and reduce the stigma and discrimination that often hinder women's full participation in public life. The campaigns target a wide audience, including young people, community leaders, and men, to foster a broader cultural shift towards respecting women's rights. The SIHRC uses various platforms for these campaigns, including media outlets, community meetings, and educational programs in schools. These efforts have contributed to increasing public awareness about women's rights and have encouraged greater community support for initiatives that promote gender equality. While changing deep-rooted cultural norms is a long-term endeavor, the SIHRC's educational campaigns have laid the groundwork for a more inclusive society where the rights of women and girls are respected.

### **Specific Actions for Targeted Groups:**

- **Women in Power and Decision-Making:** The SIHRC advocates for policies that increase women's representation in decision-making roles and supports women leaders through training and mentorship programs.
- **Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women:** By working closely with the Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development, the SIHRC helps strengthen institutional frameworks that promote gender equality.
- **Human Rights of Women:** The SIHRC's monitoring, advocacy, and educational efforts are central to protecting and promoting the human rights of women in Somalia.
- **Women and the Media:** Collaborating with media outlets to ensure fair and accurate reporting on women's rights issues is part of the SIHRC's broader strategy to change public perceptions and support gender equality.
- **The Girl Child:** The SIHRC focuses on protecting the rights of the girl child, advocating against practices like FGM and child marriage, and promoting access to education and health services.

Through these measures, the SIHRC has played a critical role in advancing women's rights and promoting gender equality in Somalia. By focusing on monitoring and reporting, advocating for legal reforms, and conducting educational campaigns, the Commission has helped to create an environment where women's issues are recognized and addressed. The SIHRC's work has also highlighted the importance of involving women in decision-making processes, supporting the development of institutional mechanisms that advance women's rights, and ensuring that the human rights of women are upheld. By addressing these areas, the SIHRC continues to make significant contributions to the protection and empowerment of women and girls in Somalia, working towards a society where all individuals can live free from discrimination and violence.

## **3.4 Peaceful and Inclusive Societies**

### **27. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?**

In the past five years, Somalia has taken significant steps to build and sustain peace, promote inclusive societies, and advance the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. These efforts

reflect a commitment to addressing the unique challenges faced by women and girls, particularly in the context of ongoing conflict and instability.

### **1. National Action Plan (NAP) for Somali Women's Security and Peace**

One major initiative is the National Action Plan (NAP) for Somali Women's Security and Peace. This strategic framework aims to tackle a range of peace and security issues affecting Somali women. The NAP addresses conflict-related sexual violence, access to justice, inclusion in state-building processes, and the impacts of climate change. It underscores the importance of enhancing the safety and protection of Somali women while promoting their active participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts. By focusing on the meaningful inclusion of women in decision-making processes, the NAP seeks to ensure that women's perspectives are integrated into peace negotiations, conflict mediation, and post-conflict reconstruction. This holistic approach not only strengthens the legal and policy frameworks but also provides comprehensive support services, such as shelters, legal aid, psychosocial support, and economic empowerment initiatives. Despite these efforts, the implementation of the NAP faces challenges, including deeply ingrained patriarchal norms and the ongoing instability that complicates the full realization of its goals.

### **2. Women's Economic Empowerment and Livelihood Programs**

Somalia has also made strides in promoting women's economic empowerment, recognizing its critical role in fostering sustainable peace and development. Various programs, such as the Women's Economic Empowerment Programme implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and local NGOs, focus on enhancing economic opportunities for vulnerable women. These initiatives provide vocational training, business development services, and access to finance, targeting women displaced by conflict, those in rural areas, and other marginalized groups. By supporting women in establishing small businesses and cooperatives, these programs help increase household incomes and improve decision-making power within families. The success of these programs highlights the importance of economic empowerment as a means to build resilience and promote peace, offering women a pathway to self-sufficiency and active participation in their communities.

### **3. Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

The eradication of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) remains a critical focus in Somalia's efforts to protect the rights and well-being of women and girls. The Somali National Action Plan to Eliminate FGM (2021-2025) outlines a comprehensive strategy to end this harmful practice by 2025. This plan includes strengthening legal and policy frameworks, conducting public awareness campaigns, and improving access to healthcare services for those affected by FGM. By challenging social norms and advocating for women's rights, the plan seeks to shift attitudes and reduce the prevalence of FGM, which is still widely practiced in Somalia. The collaborative efforts of the Somali government, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are crucial in driving this change. While there has been progress, deeply entrenched cultural beliefs and limited healthcare access continue to pose significant obstacles to the eradication of FGM.

These initiatives are part of a broader effort to address the needs of specific groups, such as women in armed conflict, the human rights of women, and the girl child. For women in armed conflict, the NAP focuses on protecting them from violence, ensuring access to justice, and including their voices in peace processes. The Somali government has proposed legal reforms, such as the Sexual Offences Bill and Domestic Violence Bill, to safeguard women's rights and address gender-based violence. Public advocacy and awareness campaigns are also instrumental in changing societal attitudes and reducing violence against women. In addition, efforts to improve access to education and challenge harmful practices like FGM are crucial for protecting the rights of the girl child and ensuring their future opportunities.

Overall, these initiatives demonstrate Somalia's commitment to building a more inclusive and equitable society, recognizing the essential role that women and girls play in achieving sustainable peace and development. The challenges remain significant, with deeply rooted cultural norms, ongoing conflict, and socio-economic barriers continuing to hinder progress. Nevertheless, the Somali government's efforts, supported by international partners and civil society, provide a foundation for continued progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

### **Specific Actions Related to Women in Armed Conflict, Human Rights of Women, and the Girl Child**

- **Women in Armed Conflict:** The NAP emphasizes protection from conflict-related violence and inclusion in peace processes. Special support programs are in place for women affected by conflict, including legal aid and psychosocial support.
- **Human Rights of Women:** Legal frameworks such as the Sexual Offences Bill and Domestic Violence Bill have been proposed to protect women's rights. Advocacy and awareness campaigns aim to shift societal attitudes and reduce gender-based violence.
- **The Girl Child:** Efforts to eliminate FGM and improve access to education are key strategies. Campaigns focus on raising awareness about the rights of girls and challenging harmful practices.

### **Data Supporting Responses**

- Somalia ranks 195th out of 206 countries on the Gender Inequality Index.
- Only 24% of parliamentary seats are held by women.
- FGM affects approximately 98% of women and girls in Somalia.

Somalia has taken concrete steps towards building peace and promoting gender equality, yet significant challenges remain. The implementation of these initiatives highlights both progress and the need for continued effort, particularly in transforming deeply rooted cultural norms and improving the socio-economic conditions of women and girls.

**28. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?**

Over the past five years, Somalia has taken significant steps to increase women's leadership, representation, and participation in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, humanitarian action, and crisis response. These initiatives focus on involving women at decision-making levels in various conflict and crisis settings.

1. **National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325:** The NAP for implementing UNSCR 1325 aims to enhance women's roles in conflict prevention, resolution, and post-conflict recovery. It emphasizes integrating gender perspectives into peace and security policies, protecting women and girls from gender-based violence, and promoting their rights and safety. The NAP targets Somali women and girls, particularly those affected by conflict and insecurity, and focuses on increasing their participation in political and peace processes. Implementation involves collaboration with government agencies, international partners, and civil society organizations, supported by both national and international funding.
2. **African Women's Leadership Network (AWLN) - Somalia Chapter:** The AWLN Somalia Chapter empowers women by providing a platform for leadership in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. It offers training, networking opportunities, and a forum for Somali women leaders to influence national and regional peace and security policies. Supported by UN Women, UNDP, and other partners, AWLN focuses on women in civil society, government, and grassroots organizations. The initiative has shown the effectiveness of dedicated platforms for women's leadership and the importance of mentorship and sustained advocacy.
3. **Gender Equality Strategy (2023-2026):** This strategy outlines Somalia's commitment to advancing gender equality, with a focus on increasing women's participation in decision-making across sectors, including peace and security. It aims to remove barriers to women's economic and political participation, prevent gender-based violence, and promote leadership. The strategy targets women and girls, especially in rural and conflict-affected areas, and is supported by national resources and international donors. Initial implementation highlights the need for strong institutional capacity, stakeholder coordination, and addressing cultural norms to enhance women's participation.

These initiatives align with Somalia's commitments under international frameworks such as UNSCR 1325, CEDAW, and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to gender equality and women's leadership in peace and security.

### **Specific Actions for Women and Armed Conflict, Human Rights of Women, and The Girl Child**

- **Women and Armed Conflict:** The NAP and AWLN initiatives focus on protecting women in conflict settings, involving them in peace negotiations, and ensuring their voices are heard in decision-making processes. Efforts include providing legal aid, psychosocial support, and promoting women's roles in peacebuilding.
- **Human Rights of Women:** The Somali government has taken steps to improve women's rights through legal reforms, public awareness campaigns, and the establishment of support services for survivors of gender-based violence. The Sexual Offences Bill/Rape

Offence and Indecency Bill is example of legal frameworks aimed at protecting women's rights.

- The Girl Child: Initiatives to eliminate harmful practices like FGM and promote girls' education are critical components of Somalia's gender equality efforts. Programs focus on changing social norms, increasing access to education, and empowering girls through leadership development.

### **Data Supporting Responses**

- Women hold only 24% of seats in the Federal Parliament, highlighting ongoing challenges in achieving the 30% quota.
- The prevalence of FGM remains high, affecting nearly 98% of Somali women and girls.
- Literacy rates for Somali women are low, with only 32% of women reported as literate.

These actions and initiatives demonstrate Somalia's commitment to advancing women's leadership and participation in peace and security. While significant progress has been made, continued efforts are needed to address the deep-rooted challenges that hinder gender equality and women's empowerment in Somalia.<sup>9</sup>

### **29. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?**

In the past five years, Somalia has taken several actions to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian actions and crisis responses. Here are three key examples of these measures:

#### **I. Development of a Comprehensive Legal Framework on Gender-Based Violence**

**Aims and Scope:** One of the critical steps taken by the Somali government is the development and implementation of a legal framework specifically targeting gender-based violence (GBV). This includes the drafting and promotion of the Sexual Offences Bill/Rape Offence and Indecency Bill. These legislative measures aim to provide clear legal definitions, criminalize various forms of sexual and gender-based violence, and establish legal mechanisms for the prosecution and punishment of offenders. The framework is designed to protect women and girls from all forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings.

**Target Population:** The primary targets of these legislative efforts are women and girls, especially those living in conflict-affected areas, displaced communities, and other vulnerable groups exposed to GBV. The laws also aim to protect survivors of sexual violence and ensure they receive justice and support.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: Key Informants Interviews; Somali National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Somali Women's Charter and UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2021 – 2025)

**Budget and Funding:** While specific budget allocations are not detailed, the implementation of these laws involves resources from the Somali government, supported by international donors and partners, including the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These partnerships provide both financial resources and technical expertise.

**Impact Evaluations and Lessons Learned:** The introduction of these laws has raised awareness about the rights of women and the unacceptability of gender-based violence. However, enforcement remains a significant challenge due to limited judicial capacity, cultural resistance, and ongoing conflict. Lessons learned include the need for robust capacity-building initiatives for law enforcement and judicial officers and the importance of community engagement to shift cultural norms.

**Links to Further Information:** These legislative efforts are aligned with Somalia's commitments under international frameworks, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security.

## **2. Establishment of Gender Desks in Police Stations**

**Aims and Scope:** To provide accessible support and enhance accountability for violations of women's rights, Somalia has established gender desks in police stations across the country. These gender desks are specialized units staffed by trained personnel, often female officers, who are equipped to handle cases of gender-based violence and other violations against women and girls. The aim is to create a safe and supportive environment for survivors to report crimes, seek assistance, and ensure that their cases are handled with sensitivity and seriousness.

**Target Population:** The gender desks primarily serve women and girls who have experienced violence or abuse. They also serve to educate the broader community about the rights of women and the importance of reporting violations.

**Budget and Funding:** The establishment and operation of gender desks are funded through a combination of government resources and support from international organizations, such as UN Women, UNDP, and other NGOs working in Somalia. These partners provide financial aid and training for police officers.

**Impact Evaluations and Lessons Learned:** The gender desks have increased reporting of gender-based violence cases, indicating improved trust in the justice system among women and girls. However, challenges remain, including limited geographical coverage, insufficient training for officers, and cultural barriers that deter reporting. It has been learned that ongoing training, community outreach, and increasing the number of gender desks are crucial for these initiatives to be more effective.

**Links to Further Information:** The initiative aligns with the goals outlined in the Somali National Development Plan (2020-2024) and supports the implementation of the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325.

## **3. National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence**

**Aims and Scope:** The National Action Plan (NAP) to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence, launched in 2019, outlines a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of GBV, strengthen support services for survivors, and foster a culture of accountability and justice. The NAP includes provisions for legal reforms, capacity building, awareness campaigns, and the establishment of support systems, such as shelters and psychosocial services.

**Target Population:** The NAP targets survivors of GBV, including women and girls in conflict-affected areas, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and other vulnerable groups. It also aims to engage community leaders, law enforcement, and policymakers to create an environment conducive to protecting women's rights.

**Budget and Funding:** The implementation of the NAP involves significant collaboration with international partners, including UN Women, UNICEF, and various NGOs. These partners provide funding and technical support to ensure the effective execution of the plan.

**Impact Evaluations and Lessons Learned:** Initial evaluations indicate that the NAP has raised awareness about GBV and improved coordination among government agencies and NGOs. However, challenges include limited resources, weak enforcement mechanisms, and the need for more comprehensive data collection to monitor progress. Lessons learned emphasize the importance of multi-sectoral approaches, sustained funding, and continuous capacity-building efforts.

**Links to Further Information:** The NAP supports Somalia's commitments to international human rights standards and aligns with the Women, Peace, and Security Humanitarian Action Compact. It is part of broader efforts to implement the UNSCR 1325 framework in Somalia.

### **Specific Actions Related to Women and Armed Conflict, Human Rights of Women, and The Girl Child**

- **Women and Armed Conflict:** The focus has been on protecting women in conflict zones from sexual violence and exploitation. The establishment of gender desks and the implementation of the NAP have provided mechanisms for reporting violations and accessing support services.
- **Human Rights of Women:** Legal reforms, such as the Sexual Offences Bill and Domestic Violence Bill, are critical steps towards safeguarding the human rights of women. These laws aim to ensure justice for survivors of violence and hold perpetrators accountable.
- **The Girl Child:** Initiatives targeting the girl child include efforts to end harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The National Action Plan to Accelerate the Elimination of FGM focuses on legal measures, awareness campaigns, and community engagement to protect girls' rights.

### **Data Supporting Responses**

- Somalia's efforts to combat GBV have led to increased reporting of such cases, highlighting a growing awareness and willingness to seek justice among women and girls.
- Surveys indicate that over 60% of Somali women are aware of their rights related to GBV, reflecting the impact of awareness campaigns and educational efforts.
- Despite these efforts, cultural barriers remain significant, with a high prevalence of FGM and other traditional practices that violate the rights of women and girls.



These measures demonstrate Somalia's commitment to enhancing judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of women's rights in conflict and crisis situations. They highlight both progress and the challenges that remain in creating an environment where women's rights are fully protected and respected.<sup>10</sup>

### **30. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child, including adolescent girls?**

In the last five years, Somalia has undertaken several initiatives to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child, including adolescent girls. These efforts are crucial for tackling deeply entrenched cultural practices and ensuring the protection and empowerment of girls in the country. Three significant measures have been implemented: the National Action Plan to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), national campaigns to promote girls' education, and legislative reforms to combat child marriage.

#### **1. National Action Plan to Accelerate the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

The National Action Plan to Accelerate the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (2021-2025) marks a critical step in Somalia's fight against this harmful practice, which affects nearly 98% of women and girls in the country. Developed in collaboration with international partners such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF, the plan aims to eradicate FGM by implementing a comprehensive strategy that includes legal reforms, public awareness campaigns, and community engagement. The plan seeks to change social norms and practices by educating communities about the dangers of FGM, advocating for its criminalization, and providing healthcare services to those affected. It targets young girls and adolescent girls, especially in rural areas where FGM is most prevalent, and involves community leaders, parents, and healthcare providers to ensure a broad-based approach.

Despite the progress made, the implementation of this action plan faces significant challenges. Cultural resistance and deeply rooted traditional beliefs continue to support the practice of FGM. Access to healthcare services is also limited, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas. Evaluations of the plan have shown increased awareness of the harms of FGM and a gradual shift in community attitudes, but there is still a long way to go. Lessons learned from the plan emphasize the importance of involving local leaders and ensuring that advocacy efforts are culturally sensitive to be effective.

#### **2. Promotion of Girls' Education Through National Campaigns**

Another critical initiative has been the national campaigns to promote girls' education. These campaigns are part of a broader strategy to increase school enrollment and retention rates for girls, who often face significant barriers to education. Surveys indicate that only 30% of girls are enrolled in primary education, and even fewer proceed to secondary education, highlighting the need for continued efforts to promote girls' education. Somalia's education system has suffered

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<sup>10</sup> Source: Key Informants Interviews.

from decades of conflict, leading to inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, and socio-cultural practices that prioritize boys' education over girls. In partnership with organizations like UNESCO and UNICEF, the Somali government has launched campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of educating girls, provide scholarships and financial support to families, and improve school infrastructure. These efforts also include implementing gender-sensitive curricula and training educators to create supportive and inclusive learning environments.

These educational initiatives have led to increased enrollment of girls in primary and secondary schools, particularly in regions where education for girls was previously undervalued. However, challenges such as inadequate school facilities, lack of female teachers, and the burden of domestic responsibilities on girls persist. Moreover, socio-cultural attitudes that view girls' education as less important than boys' education continue to hinder progress. To address these issues, sustained community engagement and advocacy are necessary, along with practical support such as providing transportation and safe learning environments for girls.

### **3. Legislation Against Child Marriage**

Child marriage remains prevalent in Somalia, with a significant proportion of girls married before the age of 18, underscoring the importance of legislative measures and community education to combat this practice. To further protect the rights of the girl child, Somalia has taken steps to combat child marriage through legislative reforms. The government has introduced legislation to prohibit marriage under the age of 18, aiming to safeguard girls' health, well-being, and educational opportunities. Child marriage remains a prevalent issue in Somalia, often driven by poverty, insecurity, and traditional beliefs. The new legislation criminalizes child marriage and establishes penalties for those who facilitate or enter into such marriages. It also sets up mechanisms for preventing child marriages, such as public awareness campaigns and the involvement of community leaders to advocate against the practice.

Although these legislative reforms represent significant progress, enforcement remains a major challenge. Cultural practices and societal norms that support child marriage are deeply ingrained, and there is often a lack of awareness or understanding of the legal provisions. Initial impacts of the legislation have included increased public discourse on the harms of child marriage and some community-level commitments to adhere to the legal age of marriage. However, effective enforcement requires robust monitoring systems, training for law enforcement officials, and continuous public education campaigns to change attitudes and behaviors.

These efforts to protect the rights of the girl child are part of broader strategies to address issues related to women and armed conflict, human rights of women, and gender equality. In conflict and post-conflict settings, girls are particularly vulnerable to violations such as sexual violence, exploitation, and early marriage. By promoting education and legal protections, Somalia aims to empower girls, reduce their vulnerability, and provide them with opportunities for a better future. Legal reforms and educational initiatives not only safeguard the rights of girls but also contribute to the broader human rights agenda by addressing discrimination, promoting equality, and ensuring that girls have the same opportunities as boys to thrive and reach their full potential.

Somalia's efforts to eliminate discrimination against the girl child are supported by international human rights frameworks, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). These initiatives also align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, which focuses on quality education, and SDG 5, which emphasizes gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. While significant progress has been made, continued efforts are needed to overcome cultural barriers, ensure effective implementation of laws and policies, and create a supportive environment where all Somali girls can live free from discrimination and realize their full potential.

### 3.5 Environmental Conservation, Protection and Rehabilitation

#### **31. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and land degradation?**

In the past five years, Somalia has increasingly recognized the importance of integrating gender perspectives into its environmental policies, particularly in the areas of climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and land degradation. These efforts reflect a growing understanding that women, especially those in rural areas, are not only disproportionately affected by environmental challenges but also play a crucial role in managing natural resources and driving sustainable development. Through various initiatives, Somalia has aimed to ensure that women's voices are heard and their needs addressed in environmental decision-making, leading to more effective and inclusive policies.

##### **1. Inclusion of Gender Perspectives in Climate Change Adaptation Strategies**

One of the significant steps Somalia has taken is incorporating gender considerations into its national climate change adaptation strategies. This approach acknowledges that women in rural and pastoral communities are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as droughts and floods, which threaten their livelihoods and food security. By involving women in climate adaptation planning and implementation, Somalia seeks to leverage their local knowledge and ensure that adaptation measures are relevant and effective. Women have been actively involved in community-based projects, where they receive training on sustainable agricultural practices, water conservation techniques, and other resilience-building strategies. These initiatives aim to empower women by enhancing their ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions, thereby improving their resilience and that of their communities.

##### **2. Gender-Responsive Biodiversity Conservation Programs**

Somalia's commitment to integrating gender perspectives is also evident in its biodiversity conservation efforts. Recognizing the critical role women play in conserving biodiversity and managing natural resources, the country has implemented programs that explicitly include women in conservation activities. These programs aim to empower women by providing them with the skills and resources needed to engage in sustainable land management practices. Women are encouraged to participate in activities such as reforestation, soil conservation, and the protection of endangered species. By involving women, these programs not only tap into a valuable resource

for conservation efforts but also provide economic opportunities and promote gender equality. Women's participation has been shown to lead to more sustainable and successful conservation outcomes, as they bring unique perspectives and a commitment to safeguarding the environment for future generations.

### **3. Gender Mainstreaming in Land Degradation Projects**

Efforts to combat land degradation in Somalia have similarly integrated gender considerations. Projects aimed at rehabilitating degraded land and promoting sustainable agricultural practices have recognized the vital role women play in managing land resources. Women are often responsible for farming and managing household food production, making them key stakeholders in efforts to combat land degradation. By involving women in these projects, Somalia aims to improve soil fertility, enhance food security, and support sustainable livelihoods. Women participate in training sessions on soil conservation, water management, and agroforestry, gaining knowledge that not only helps restore degraded land but also contributes to their economic empowerment. These projects emphasize the importance of providing women with the tools and support needed to adopt sustainable practices, which can lead to more resilient communities and ecosystems.

The integration of gender perspectives into environmental policies in Somalia also aligns with broader efforts to protect human rights and promote gender equality. These initiatives are guided by international frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to gender equality and climate action. By involving women in environmental management, Somalia is not only addressing environmental challenges but also advancing the rights and empowerment of women. This approach recognizes that sustainable development cannot be achieved without the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of society.

Furthermore, these gender-responsive environmental initiatives have a significant impact on the younger generation, particularly girls. By involving women in leadership roles and decision-making processes related to environmental management, these initiatives serve as a powerful example for girls, inspiring them to pursue education and careers in fields related to the environment and sustainability. Educational programs and community engagement activities often include components that educate girls about the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable practices, fostering a sense of responsibility and stewardship from a young age. This not only prepares girls to contribute to environmental sustainability but also helps to challenge traditional gender roles and promote greater gender equality.

Data and evaluations from these initiatives highlight the positive impact of integrating gender perspectives into environmental policies. Women's involvement in climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation projects has led to more effective and sustainable outcomes, as their unique insights and knowledge contribute to better project design and implementation. Community engagement has increased, and there is a growing acceptance of sustainable practices,

indicating that gender-sensitive approaches are crucial for achieving long-term environmental goals.<sup>11</sup>

Despite these positive developments, challenges remain. Cultural barriers and traditional gender norms can limit women's participation in environmental initiatives, and there is a need for ongoing training and capacity building to ensure that women are fully empowered to take on leadership roles. Additionally, securing consistent funding and resources to support gender-responsive projects remains a critical issue. Continued efforts are needed to address these challenges, including promoting legal reforms to secure women's land rights and providing targeted support to women-headed households, which are often the most vulnerable to environmental degradation.

In conclusion, Somalia's efforts to integrate gender perspectives into its environmental policies demonstrate a commitment to both environmental sustainability and gender equality. By recognizing and addressing the unique vulnerabilities and contributions of women, Somalia is working towards more inclusive and effective environmental management. These initiatives not only help protect the environment but also empower women, improve livelihoods, and promote social equity, laying the foundation for a more sustainable and resilient future for all Somalis.

### **32. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience?**

In recent years, Somalia has actively worked to integrate gender perspectives into its policies and programs for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience. Recognizing the disproportionate impact of climate change and environmental hazards on women, particularly those in vulnerable communities, Somalia's initiatives aim to include women in decision-making processes and address their specific needs. By doing so, the country seeks to create more effective and inclusive approaches to disaster preparedness and resilience building, ensuring that women are not only beneficiaries but also key participants in these efforts.

#### **I. Gender-Responsive National Disaster Risk Management Policy**

One of the significant actions Somalia has taken is the implementation of a National Disaster Risk Management (NDRM) Policy that incorporates gender considerations. This policy is designed to strengthen the country's capacity to manage and mitigate risks associated with natural disasters, such as droughts, floods, and other climate-related events. The NDRM Policy focuses on enhancing community resilience by promoting gender-sensitive approaches to risk assessment, early warning systems, emergency response, and recovery planning. It acknowledges that women and girls are often among the most vulnerable in disaster situations and therefore emphasizes the need to empower them as active participants in disaster risk management. The policy targets women in disaster-prone areas, including those in rural communities and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. By involving women in community-based disaster preparedness activities, Somalia ensures that their unique perspectives and needs are considered, leading to more comprehensive and effective disaster management strategies.

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<sup>11</sup> Source: Key Informants Interview.

## **2. Women-Led Community-Based Resilience Programs**

In addition to the NDRM Policy, Somalia has supported women-led community-based resilience programs, recognizing the vital role that women play in enhancing community resilience to environmental and climate-related shocks. These programs are designed to build the capacity of women to take leadership roles in disaster preparedness and response. They involve training women in risk assessment, early warning systems, and emergency response planning. By focusing on women, these programs aim to tap into their local knowledge and skills, which are invaluable for effective disaster management. Women's leadership in these programs has proven to be instrumental in improving the accuracy of risk assessments and the effectiveness of emergency responses. Furthermore, these programs foster a sense of community solidarity, as they engage not only women but also men and boys, encouraging a community-wide commitment to resilience building.

## **3. Integration of Gender Perspectives in Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability Projects**

Another area where Somalia has integrated gender perspectives is in its climate resilience and environmental sustainability projects. These projects are focused on promoting sustainable environmental practices and enhancing community resilience to climate change by involving women in project planning and implementation. Recognizing that women are often the primary managers of natural resources, these projects aim to empower them by providing education and training on sustainable land management, water conservation, and the use of renewable energy sources. Women in rural and agricultural communities, particularly those who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, are the main beneficiaries of these projects. By equipping women with the skills needed to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change, Somalia not only enhances environmental sustainability but also supports the economic empowerment and social inclusion of women.

These initiatives to integrate gender perspectives into disaster risk reduction and climate resilience policies are closely aligned with Somalia's broader commitment to human rights and gender equality. They reflect the understanding that addressing the specific vulnerabilities and contributions of women is essential for achieving sustainable development. By involving women in these efforts, Somalia is promoting their rights and enhancing their roles as key agents of change. The inclusion of gender perspectives also highlights the critical link between gender equality and environmental sustainability, as it ensures that women's voices are heard and their knowledge and skills are utilized in managing natural resources and building resilience.

For the girl child, these initiatives offer opportunities for education and empowerment, inspiring the next generation of female leaders in disaster risk management and environmental sustainability. By involving girls in educational programs and community activities related to climate resilience, Somalia is fostering a more informed and resilient population that is better equipped to face the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation. This approach not only helps to protect the rights of girls but also contributes to breaking down traditional gender roles, paving the way for greater gender equality in the future.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Source: Key Informants Interview.

Overall, Somalia's efforts to integrate gender perspectives into disaster risk reduction and climate resilience initiatives demonstrate a commitment to creating a more inclusive, equitable, and resilient society. By recognizing and addressing the unique needs and contributions of women, these initiatives are helping to build a foundation for sustainable development and a safer, more resilient future for all Somalis. The success of these efforts underscores the importance of continued investment in gender-sensitive policies and programs, as well as the need for ongoing engagement with local communities to ensure that the benefits of these initiatives are realized at all levels of society.

## 4 Section Four: National Institutions and Processes

**33. Please describe your country's national strategy or action plan for gender equality, including its name, the period it covers, its priority, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.**

Somalia's commitment to gender equality is structured around its **Gender Equality Strategy (2023-2026)**. This strategy is a comprehensive, multi-sectoral plan developed through a consultative process involving government, civil society, and international partners. It aims to address systemic gender disparities and empower Somali women by focusing on the following four key pillars:

1. **Eliminating Structural Barriers to Women's Economic Independence and Empowerment:** The strategy targets the root causes of economic marginalization of women, including unemployment and limited access to financial resources and productive assets, proposing specific interventions to empower women economically.
2. **Prevention of Gender-Based Violations:** It emphasizes the prevention and response to all forms of gender-based violence by strengthening legal and policy frameworks, improving support services for survivors, and raising awareness to transform social norms.
3. **Promoting Women's Participation and Leadership in Decision-Making:** The strategy seeks to enhance women's representation and leadership across all decision-making levels, aiming to ensure that women's voices are influential in political, economic, and social spheres.
4. **Strengthening Gender-Responsive Strategies for Crisis Prevention, Preparedness, and Recovery:** Recognizing the unique challenges faced by women in conflicts and crises, the strategy includes gender-sensitive approaches in humanitarian response and disaster risk reduction, ensuring women's participation in these efforts.

### Goals and Targets

The strategy sets specific goals and targets for each of the pillars, with particular attention to:

- Empowering women economically through access to jobs and resources.
- Reducing instances of gender-based violence and improving the support network for survivors.
- Increasing the percentage of women in political and leadership roles.
- Integrating gender perspectives in crisis management and response initiatives.

### Priority Actions and Implementation

Key actions include:

- Reforming policies to remove economic barriers for women.
- Implementing comprehensive public education campaigns against gender-based violence.
- Creating incentives and support systems to promote women in leadership.
- Ensuring that crisis response plans are gender-responsive.



The implementation is overseen by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, with support from various international and local organizations, aiming for collaborative execution and impact assessment.

### **Funding and Sustainability**

Funding for the Gender Equality Strategy comes from both the Somali government and international donors, including UN agencies and other international development partners. The strategy includes mechanisms for monitoring and accountability to ensure funds are used effectively to achieve gender equality goals.

### **Alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The strategy aligns closely with Sustainable Development Goal 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Specific targets under SDG 5 that the strategy addresses include:

- Ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- Eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres.
- Ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making.
- Undertaking reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources.

### **Target Populations and Special Initiatives**

- **Women in Poverty:** Initiatives to address this group include vocational training, access to microloans, and support for women-led enterprises, particularly in rural areas where poverty is more pronounced.
- **Women with Disabilities:** The strategy includes specific provisions to ensure accessibility and inclusion in all programs, with a focus on eliminating discrimination and promoting self-reliance.
- **Human Rights of Women and the Girl Child:** This includes aggressive campaigns against harmful practices like FGM and child marriage, bolstering legal systems to protect women and girls, and enhancing service delivery for survivors of violence.

Implementing these targeted actions presents several challenges. There is a notable need for more detailed and disaggregated data to effectively tailor and monitor interventions for these specific groups. The gaps in current data make it difficult to accurately assess needs and track progress. Additionally, ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to these interventions requires meticulous budgeting and prioritization, which can be challenging in a context where resources for gender equality are already limited. Moreover, deep-seated cultural norms and social stigmas can impede the effective implementation of these programs, especially in conservative or rural areas where traditional views on gender roles still prevail.

The comprehensive approach of the Gender Equality Strategy (2023-2026) demonstrates Somalia’s commitment to transforming societal norms and economic structures to foster a more inclusive and equitable environment for women. The success of this strategy will depend on robust implementation, continuous monitoring, and effective collaboration among government bodies, civil society, and international partners.

**34. Please describe your country's system for tracking the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting), including the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in this area.**

In Somalia, gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is a crucial part of the government's strategy to address gender inequality and promote women's empowerment. Here's a more detailed explanation of the systems, achievements, and challenges associated with GRB in Somalia.

### **System for Gender-Responsive Budgeting**

Somalia has institutionalized gender-responsive budgeting within its financial management systems, engaging various governmental bodies to ensure that a portion of the national budget is explicitly allocated towards gender equality initiatives. The Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development (MoFHRD) plays a pivotal role in this process, advocating for and overseeing the integration of gender perspectives into all budgeting and policy-making processes. This involves:

- **Budget Planning:** Incorporating gender analysis into the early stages of budget planning to ensure that allocations reflect the needs of women and men equally.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaborating with NGOs, civil society, and international organizations to gather data and insights that inform gender-responsive policies.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establishing systems to track the impact of funded initiatives and adjust strategies as necessary.

### **Proportion of National Budget for Gender Equality**

The specific percentage of Somalia's national budget dedicated to gender equality is not detailed in the provided documents, which is reflective of broader challenges in data transparency and access in the region. However, significant investments have been noted in sectors crucial for gender development, including health, education, and legal protection against gender-based violence.

### **Disaggregated Budget Allocations**

Budget allocations to critical areas of gender development include:

- **Health Sector:** Increased funding for maternal health services, reproductive health education, and infrastructure to support healthcare access in rural areas, directly addressing critical aspects of gender disparity in health.
- **Education:** Allocations aimed at reducing gender disparities in education outcomes, such as scholarships for girls, training for female teachers, and infrastructure improvements in schools predominantly attended by girls.
- **Violence Protection and Legal Aid:** Funding for initiatives to combat gender-based violence, including support for women's shelters, legal aid programs, and public awareness campaigns about women's rights.

### **Achievements in Gender-Responsive Budgeting**

Achievements in GRB in Somalia include:

- **Policy Integration:** The successful integration of gender perspectives into national development plans and policies, ensuring that gender equality is a cross-cutting theme in all governmental efforts.
- **Sectoral Impacts:** Notable improvements in access to services for women and girls, particularly in health and education, attributable to targeted budget allocations.

### Challenges in Gender-Responsive Budgeting

Despite these achievements, Somalia faces significant challenges in fully implementing an effective gender-responsive budgeting system:

- **Data Scarcity:** A lack of reliable and disaggregated data makes it difficult to accurately track spending and assess the impact of initiatives on gender equality.
- **Institutional Capacity:** Limited capacity within key institutions hampers the effective implementation and monitoring of gender-responsive policies.
- **Political and Economic Instability:** Ongoing instability and conflict exacerbate gender disparities and complicate the implementation of long-term budget commitments.

### Future Directions

Going forward, Somalia needs to focus on strengthening institutional capacities for GRB and improving data collection and transparency. This includes training for government officials on gender budgeting techniques, better data management systems, and increased public engagement to ensure accountability.

In summary, while Somalia has established mechanisms for gender-responsive budgeting and made some progress towards gender equality, significant challenges remain. Overcoming these challenges will require sustained commitment from both the Somali government and its international partners, coupled with strategic investments in capacity building and data management.

## 35. What formal mechanisms are in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

In Somalia, various participatory mechanisms and processes have been established to engage different stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These mechanisms aim to ensure broad-based participation, particularly of women and marginalized groups, to effectively address gender equality and women's empowerment. Here's a detailed description of these processes:

### Participatory Mechanisms for BPfA and the 2030 Agenda

#### I. National Coordination Mechanisms:

- **Expert Group Meetings:** Somalia has established platforms such as Expert Group Meetings involving government ministries, civil society organizations (CSOs), and international partners. These meetings serve as a forum for discussing progress, challenges, and strategies related to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

- **Consultative Forums:** Regular consultative forums with stakeholders, including women's groups and community leaders, ensure that diverse perspectives are included in policy-making processes.
- 2. **Integration with National Development Plans:**
  - The Somali National Development Plan (NDP) incorporates the goals of the BPfA and the SDGs, with specific targets related to gender equality. These plans are developed through a participatory process, engaging multiple stakeholders to ensure that the plans are comprehensive and inclusive.
- 3. **Ministry of F and Human Rights Development (MoFHRD):**
  - This ministry plays a key role in coordinating gender-focused initiatives and serves as a bridge between the government, civil society, and international agencies. It facilitates stakeholder engagement in planning, implementing, and monitoring gender policies.

### Impact on Implementation

- **Policy Implementation:** These participatory mechanisms have enabled more informed and inclusive policy-making, which has led to more targeted and effective gender equality initiatives.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Through these platforms, stakeholders can provide feedback and contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of programs, leading to adjustments and improvements in strategies.

### Participation of Marginalized Women and Girls

1. **Targeted Outreach Programs:**
  - Specific programs are designed to reach out to women and girls from marginalized communities, including those displaced by conflict, rural women, and women with disabilities.
  - Initiatives such as community dialogues and workshops are held in accessible venues to ensure participation from all groups.
2. **Inclusive Policy Frameworks:**
  - Policies are drafted with provisions to address the needs of marginalized women and girls, ensuring that these frameworks are not only inclusive but also responsive to the diverse needs of the Somali population.
3. **Capacity Building:**
  - Training programs are provided to enhance the capabilities of women from marginalized communities to engage effectively in these processes. These trainings focus on leadership, advocacy, and rights awareness.
4. **Feedback Mechanisms:**
  - Mechanisms such as public consultations and feedback channels through local NGOs ensure that the voices of marginalized women are heard and integrated into policy and program development.

### Ensuring Effective Participation

- **Representation Quotas:** Somalia employs quotas to ensure women's representation in political and decision-making processes, which helps to raise the issues of marginalized groups.

- **Partnerships with Local and International NGOs:** These partnerships are crucial for reaching out to and mobilizing marginalized communities, ensuring their active participation in the implementation and monitoring of the BPfA and SDGs.

### Challenges

- Despite these mechanisms, challenges such as political instability, insufficient resources, and logistical barriers in conflict-affected areas can hinder effective participation. Ongoing efforts are needed to strengthen these participatory processes and ensure that they can operate effectively under varying conditions.

Somalia has established formal participatory mechanisms to engage stakeholders in gender equality initiatives effectively. These mechanisms are designed to be inclusive, specifically ensuring that women and girls from marginalized groups have the opportunity to participate and have their concerns reflected in these processes. The impact of these mechanisms, while positive, requires continuous support and enhancement to address the remaining and emerging challenges.

### 36. Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.

The national report on Somalia's adherence to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development involved a comprehensive participatory process, engaging various stakeholders to contribute significantly to its preparation and content. Here's an overview based on the analysis of the attached documents:

#### Stakeholder Contributions to the National Report Preparation

- **Government Agencies and Ministries:** These played crucial roles, particularly the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, which coordinated the overarching framework and contributed through policy formulation and monitoring. Various other ministries participated by integrating gender-responsive measures within their sectoral policies and actions.
- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** CSOs were instrumental in providing ground-level data and case studies that highlighted the impact of policies and the remaining gaps. Their advocacy work ensured that critical issues such as gender-based violence, economic empowerment, and political participation were adequately covered in the report.
- **International Partners and Donors:** These stakeholders contributed through financial and technical support, ensuring the report was comprehensive and aligned with international standards. Their involvement also helped in benchmarking Somalia's progress against global indicators.
- **Local Communities and Traditional Leaders:** Input from these groups was critical in addressing culturally sensitive issues like female genital mutilation (FGM) and women's inheritance rights. Their participation helped in making the report culturally relevant and reflective of the Somali context.

## Participatory Processes

- **Consultative Meetings and Workshops:** The preparation of the national report involved a series of consultative meetings and workshops that brought together stakeholders from various sectors. These meetings served as platforms for exchanging ideas and experiences, discussing challenges, and formulating recommendations.
- **Surveys and Field Studies:** To gather empirical data, extensive surveys and field studies were conducted across different regions of Somalia. These efforts were crucial in providing a robust data foundation for the report, highlighting the real situations on the ground.
- **Review Sessions:** Draft versions of the report were subjected to multiple review sessions, where stakeholders could provide feedback and suggest improvements. This iterative process ensured that the report was accurate and representative of all contributions.

## Reflection on Stakeholder Contributions

- **Impact of Contributions:** The diverse stakeholder involvement enriched the report, making it multidimensional and inclusive. For example, contributions from women's groups ensured that the report addressed specific gender issues comprehensively. Similarly, input from international entities helped align the national priorities with global goals.
- **Challenges:** Despite the inclusive process, challenges such as coordination among various groups, logistical issues, and the integration of feedback into the final document were noted. These challenges underscored the need for improved collaboration and resource allocation for future reporting cycles.

In conclusion, the preparation of Somalia's national report was a collaborative effort that effectively utilized the participatory approach to ensure a broad range of perspectives were included. This not only enhanced the quality of the report but also fostered a sense of ownership and commitment among all stakeholders involved in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in line with the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda.

**37. Please describe your country's action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women.**

Somalia's engagement with international human rights mechanisms, particularly through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and other platforms, reflects a strategic commitment to addressing gender inequality and discrimination against women. Below is a detailed analysis based on the document provided:

## Action Plan and Timeline for Implementation of Recommendations

**Last Review and Recommendations:** Somalia's last UPR review occurred in 2021, during which numerous recommendations were made concerning gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women. Following this review, Somalia has taken steps to implement these recommendations through several strategic initiatives:

### 1. Legal Reforms:

- **Sexual Offences Bill/Rape Offence and Indecency:** Introduction and legislative advancement aimed at criminalizing gender-based violence and offering better protections for women and girls.

### 2. National Policies:

- **National Gender Policy (2019):** Formulated to provide a framework for promoting gender equality and empowering women across various sectors, from education and healthcare to economic participation and political representation.
- **Gender Equality Strategy (2023-2026):** Developed to eliminate structural barriers to women's economic independence and promote women's participation in decision-making processes across all levels of government and society .

### 3. Implementation Timeline:

- The initiatives like the National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence and legislative reforms are phased over several years, aiming for significant milestones by 2026.
- The timeline includes periodic reviews and the establishment of monitoring mechanisms to assess progress and make necessary adjustments to the implementation strategies.

## Follow-up Actions and Implementation

### Progress:

- **Legal and Institutional Frameworks:** The establishment of legal frameworks such as the Sexual Offences Bill is part of Somalia's proactive approach to conforming to international standards concerning gender equality and women's rights.
- **Capacity Building:** Efforts have been made to enhance the capabilities of governmental and non-governmental bodies to effectively implement gender-sensitive policies and practices.

### Barriers:

- **Resource Constraints:** Limited financial and human resources have been a significant barrier, impacting the timely and effective implementation of the UPR recommendations.
- **Cultural and Social Norms:** Deeply rooted patriarchal norms continue to pose challenges, requiring sustained social transformation and educational efforts to change perceptions and behaviors towards gender equality.

### Documentation and Reporting:

- Reports and updates are periodically prepared and shared with international bodies to demonstrate progress and outline challenges in the implementation of the UPR recommendations related to gender equality.

While Somalia has made concerted efforts to align with international recommendations on gender equality, challenges such as resource limitations, socio-cultural dynamics, and the need for

continuous capacity building remain prevalent. The commitment to legislative reforms and national policies underscores a foundational shift towards enhancing gender equality, yet the full realization of these goals necessitates ongoing commitment and international support.

## 5 Section Five: Data and Statistics

### 38. What are the most important areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?

Over the past five years, Somalia has made notable progress in enhancing gender statistics, which is crucial for monitoring advancements and challenges in gender equality. This effort involves a multidimensional approach, including legislative updates, data improvement initiatives, and direct intervention programs aimed at women's economic and social empowerment. Below are elaborated details of three significant measures taken, their implementation, impact, and associated lessons.

#### 1. Legislative Enhancements for Gender Equality

**Aim and Scope:** Strengthening the legislative framework to better protect women's rights and address gender-based violence, aiming to create an accountable and responsive legal system.

**Measures Taken:** The enactment of the Sexual Offences Bill represented foundational steps towards establishing a legal framework that rigorously addresses and penalizes acts of gender-based violence while providing clear legal recourse for victims.

**Budget and Funding:** While specific allocations are often wrapped into broader national security and justice budgets, funding for these legislative measures generally involves state resources complemented by support from international bodies advocating for human rights.

**Impact Evaluations:** The implementation of these laws has led to a reported increase in gender-based violence cases being brought to light, reflecting both improved legal awareness and the growing trust of victims in the judicial system. However, the effectiveness of these laws continues to be monitored for real-world impact on reducing incidents of violence.

**Lessons Learned:** Effective legislation requires not only clear laws but also comprehensive training for law enforcement and judiciary systems, public awareness campaigns, and accessible legal support services for victims.

**Further Information:** Detailed analyses and updates on the impact and challenges of these laws can be found in the annual reports issued by Somalia's Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development.

#### 2. Advancements in Gender Data Collection

**Aim and Scope:** To fill the critical gaps in gender-disaggregated data that hinder effective policy formulation and gender equality monitoring.

**Measures Taken:** Establishment of a gender statistics unit within the Somalia National Bureau of Statistics dedicated to the systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of data reflecting the status and progress of women in various sectors such as education, health, and employment.



**Budget and Funding:** This initiative is primarily supported by the Somali government, with additional funding and technical assistance from international development agencies focused on statistical capacity building.

**Impact Evaluations:** Enhanced data collection has provided policymakers and stakeholders with better tools to assess the effectiveness of gender-focused programs and policies, allowing for more targeted and informed decision-making.

**Lessons Learned:** Continuous investment in statistical capacities and technology is essential for maintaining the quality and relevance of data. Furthermore, regular training for data collectors and analysts is crucial for ensuring the accuracy and reliability of gender statistics.

**Further Information:** Regular publications and reports from the Somalia National Bureau of Statistics provide insights into ongoing efforts and developments in gender data.

### **3. Economic Empowerment Initiatives for Women**

**Aim and Scope:** To economically empower women through direct interventions that provide skills, financial resources, and support for business development, aimed at improving women's economic status and autonomy.

**Measures Taken:** The UNDP's Women's Economic Empowerment Programme exemplifies such initiatives, offering vocational training, microfinance, and business support services specifically tailored for women, including those in displaced and marginalized communities.

**Budget and Funding:** This program is a collaborative effort involving national budget allocations and significant contributions from international donors focused on development and gender equality.

**Impact Evaluations:** Studies and feedback from the program participants indicate improvements in women's economic contributions and personal empowerment. Many beneficiaries have successfully launched or expanded businesses, contributing to local economies and enhancing community resilience.

**Lessons Learned:** Long-term success in economic empowerment programs hinges on sustained support, continuous market assessment to align training with economic opportunities, and the integration of empowerment programs with broader community development plans.

**Further Information:** The UNDP and Somalia's Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation provide comprehensive reports and analyses on the outcomes and impacts of these economic initiatives.

#### **Actions for Specific Groups in Somalia**

Somalia has implemented targeted measures to support marginalized and vulnerable groups within its commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. These efforts concentrate on women with disabilities, displaced women, and women from minority clans.

**Women with Disabilities:** Initiatives aim to fully integrate them into societal aspects, backed by the Somali Disability Act which ensures their rights and access to key services. Although data are limited, early findings suggest improved access and social inclusion, supported by both national and international funding.

**Displaced Women:** Facing increased risks of violence and economic challenges, these women benefit from healthcare, legal aid, and economic programs, notably the SAGAL Social Transfers

project. Despite progress in improving conditions, sustaining and integrating these efforts remains a challenge, necessitating strong coordination between government and humanitarian organizations.

**Women from Minority Clans:** The focus here is on overcoming discrimination through community-based advocacy and educational programs, backed by national and international funds. Reports indicate a growing awareness and community involvement among these women, underscoring the need for culturally sensitive and community-engaged strategies.

The review report highlights the advancements in gender statistics in Somalia from 2020 to 2024, demonstrating the government's dedication to gender equality through substantial legislative, statistical, and programmatic initiatives. The lessons learned highlight the importance of comprehensive approaches that include legal reforms, capacity building, and economic empowerment to sustain and advance the gains in gender equality. Continued efforts are crucial for building on these foundations, ensuring that the advances translate into tangible improvements in the lives of Somali women and girls.

### **39. Over the next five years, what are your country's priorities for strengthening national gender statistics?**

Over the next five years, Somalia aims to significantly strengthen national gender statistics, with a focused and strategic approach that encompasses several key areas. These priorities are designed to enhance the capacity for gender-responsive policy making and program implementation, and to better monitor the progress and challenges in achieving gender equality. Here are the main areas of focus along with examples of planned actions:

#### **I. Enhancement of Gender Data Collection and Analysis**

**Explanation:** Recognizing the critical role that accurate and comprehensive data plays in gender equality initiatives, Somalia plans to invest in expanding and refining its gender data collection and analysis capabilities.

##### **Examples of Plans:**

- **Establishment of a Dedicated Gender Data Hub:** Somalia intends to establish a centralized data hub that will focus specifically on gathering, analyzing, and disseminating gender-disaggregated data. This hub will aim to ensure that all gender-related data is accessible for policy making and public information.
- **Annual Gender Statistics Reports:** Regular publication of detailed gender statistics reports to provide insights into trends, progress, and areas needing attention. These reports will help monitor changes over time and adjust policies and programs accordingly.

#### **2. Capacity Building for Data Management**

**Explanation:** To effectively manage and utilize gender statistics, there is a need to build the capacity of institutions and personnel involved in data collection and analysis.

### Examples of Plans:

- **Training Programs for Statisticians and Analysts:** Conducting extensive training programs aimed at enhancing the skills of statisticians and data analysts in gender-sensitive data collection and analysis techniques.
- **International Partnerships for Expertise Exchange:** Forming partnerships with international statistical organizations to facilitate knowledge exchange and technical assistance in best practices for gender data management.

### 3. Integration of Gender Statistics into National Development Planning

**Explanation:** Somalia aims to integrate gender statistics into all aspects of national development planning to ensure that gender considerations are effectively addressed in all government initiatives.

### Examples of Plans:

- **Gender Impact Assessments:** Implementing mandatory gender impact assessments for all new policies and programs to understand their potential effects on gender equality.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establishing robust feedback mechanisms to gather input from women's groups and civil society organizations on the usability and impact of gender data on community development.

These priorities reflect Somalia's commitment to improving the quality and utility of gender statistics as a fundamental aspect of promoting gender equality and empowering women. By enhancing data collection, building capacity, and integrating gender considerations into broader national frameworks, Somalia is laying the groundwork for more informed and effective gender policies that can drive significant social change.

## 40. What gender-specific indicators<sup>7</sup> has your country prioritized for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

Somalia has strategically integrated gender-specific indicators into its approach to monitor progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a particular focus on areas critical to achieving gender equality. This emphasis on gender-specific indicators is vital in tackling the unique challenges that women in Somalia encounter and in evaluating advancements toward international gender equality objectives.

### 1. Women's Economic Participation:

In terms of Women's Economic Participation, indicators like labor force participation rate by sex, wage equality for similar work, and the proportion of women in ownership or leadership roles are pivotal. These metrics aid in gauging the economic empowerment of women, striving to close the employment and earnings gaps between genders and fostering female entrepreneurship.

### 2. Women's Health and Reproductive Rights:

For Women's Health and Reproductive Rights, indicators such as the maternal mortality ratio, the proportion of births attended by skilled personnel, satisfaction with family planning, and the incidence of gender-based violence are crucial. These indicators are essential for improving

healthcare services and reproductive rights for women, focusing on reducing maternal mortality rates and enhancing access to quality healthcare, which are vital for women's overall health and autonomy.

### **3. Women's Political Representation:**

In addressing Women's Political Representation, the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and their representation in public sector leadership roles are monitored. These indicators help track progress toward gender parity in political and decision-making processes, ensuring women have equal opportunities to influence policies that impact their lives and the broader community.

### **Challenges in Data Collection and Compilation:**

However, collecting and compiling data on these gender-specific indicators presents several challenges:

- **Data Availability and Quality:** Extensive gaps in gender-disaggregated data make it challenging to monitor progress accurately and craft targeted interventions. The lack of high-quality, accessible data hampers the ability to effectively measure outcomes related to gender-specific initiatives.
- **Institutional Capacity:** The limited capacity of relevant institutions impacts their ability to collect, process, and disseminate data effectively. Challenges in standardizing and harmonizing data collection methods across different agencies hinder efforts to establish a cohesive national database on gender indicators.
- **Security and Accessibility:** Ongoing conflicts and instability in certain regions significantly obstruct data collection, particularly in remote and conflict-affected areas where gender disparities are often most pronounced. These conditions limit access to reliable data and can distort the understanding of gender issues within the country.
- **Technical and Resource Constraints:** There is a dire need for advanced technical skills and sufficient resources dedicated to gender statistics. Without adequate technical expertise and financial investment, data collection efforts can be inefficient and may not meet international standards for data accuracy and reliability.

Enhancing the system for collecting and analyzing gender-specific data is essential for Somalia as it aims to meet its SDG commitments and improve gender equality. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes enhancing technical capabilities, improving security and access in data collection areas, and strengthening institutional frameworks. By tackling these issues, Somalia can ensure that its gender equality policies are well-informed and effectively targeted to meet the needs of women across the nation.

### **4I. Which data disaggregations<sup>8</sup> are routinely provided by major surveys in your country?**

The major surveys in Somalia, such as the Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS) 2020, provide various data disaggregation including information on gender, location, and demographic groups like women with disabilities, displaced women, and minority clans.

Over the past years, there has been an effort to enhance data disaggregation in Somalia to better inform policy-making, programming, and decision-making processes, as highlighted by the 2023 Governance Statistics Report from the Somalia National Bureau of Statistics. However, the progress has been inconsistent and faces several barriers. The prioritization of certain disaggregation, such as gender, is largely driven by the country's focus on addressing deep-rooted gender inequalities and supporting vulnerable groups like women and girls, as these issues are critical for international development targets and the empowerment agendas set by various global and local stakeholders.

Despite these efforts, comprehensive and routine data disaggregation in major surveys are hindered by several barriers:

1. **Insufficient Data and Research Infrastructure:** There is a persistent lack of reliable disaggregated data, impeding the development of effective interventions tailored to the unique challenges faced by different groups within the Somali population.
2. **Cultural and Societal Norms:** Deeply entrenched cultural norms and the ongoing conflict in Somalia complicate data collection and the implementation of programs that require detailed disaggregation.
3. **Resource Constraints:** Limited resources and ongoing political instability pose significant challenges to conducting extensive surveys and implementing systems that can manage detailed and continuous data disaggregation.

Addressing these barriers requires a concerted effort involving increased investment in data systems, capacity building for local institutions, and enhanced cooperation between the government, international partners, and NGOs to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of data-driven decision-making processes.

## 6 Section Six: Conclusion and Next Steps

The review report dives deeper into the key aspects of the Beijing+30 National Review Report for Somalia, focusing on the ongoing challenges, lessons learned, and reflections on how Somalia can apply these lessons in continuing to implement the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in Somalia:

### Challenges to implementing the BPfA:

The country has faced a myriad of challenges that have hindered the full realization of the goals of BPfA. One of the primary obstacles has been the persistent threat of explosions, which have not only claimed countless lives but have also disrupted essential services and infrastructure, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable populations, including women and girls.

Closely linked to the issue of explosions is the ongoing problem of Armed Conflicts and Civil Wars that have plagued Somalia for years. These violent clashes have not only displaced thousands of people, but have also eroded the social fabric, making it incredibly difficult for the government to effectively address the needs of its citizens, particularly those of women and marginalized groups.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already fragile situation in Somalia, straining the country's limited resources and healthcare system. The pandemic has not only amplified the economic and social challenges faced by the Somali people but has also disrupted essential services and programs that were previously in place to support women and girls.

Adding to these daunting challenges is the ever-present threat of Climate Change, which has led to a series of devastating droughts, floods, and other natural disasters. These climate-related events have further destabilized the country, leading to food insecurity, displacement, and the erosion of livelihoods, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable segments of the population.

During the review period from 2019 to 2024, Somalia experienced a particularly turbulent time, marked by on-and-off violence, killings of individuals, and robbery, all of which were accompanied by a severe drought in 2011. This period resulted in one of the worst humanitarian crises the country had faced in the past two decades, further complicating the implementation of the BPfA and the Ministry's efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Generally, interview with MoFHRD staff revealed several key factors have hindered the progress towards greater gender equality and the enhancement of human rights in Somalia:

**Deeply Entrenched Patriarchal Norms and Traditions:** Somalia's social and cultural landscape is deeply rooted in patriarchal norms and traditional gender roles, which often marginalize and undervalue the status and rights of women and girls. Deeply ingrained societal attitudes and beliefs about the perceived inferiority of women continue to pose significant barriers to achieving gender equality.

**Ongoing Conflict and Instability:** Somalia has endured decades of civil war, political unrest, and the presence of armed groups, which have had a disproportionate impact on the lives of women and girls. The persistent instability and insecurity have disrupted the functioning of key institutions and social services, making it challenging to effectively implement gender-responsive policies and programs.

**Weak Institutional Capacity and Governance Challenges:** The Somali government has faced significant capacity and resource constraints in building strong, accountable, and gender-responsive institutions. Weak rule of law, corruption, and the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms have undermined the implementation of laws and policies aimed at protecting women's rights.

**Limited Access to Education and Economic Opportunities:** Somali women and girls often have limited access to quality education, vocational training, and economic opportunities, further entrenching their marginalization and vulnerability. The lack of economic empowerment and financial independence can perpetuate the cycle of gender-based violence and make it harder for women to assert their rights.

**Inadequate Healthcare and Social Services:** The healthcare system in Somalia faces significant challenges, including a shortage of resources, limited access to essential services, and a lack of specialized services for women's health and reproductive rights. The scarcity of social services, such as shelters, legal aid, and psychosocial support for survivors of gender-based violence, hinders the ability to provide comprehensive support.

**Insufficient Data and Research:** There is a persistent lack of reliable, disaggregated data on gender-related issues, which can hamper the development of evidence-based policies and programs. The limited knowledge and understanding of the unique challenges faced by Somali women and girls can impede the design of effective interventions.

**Uncoordinated Efforts:** Partners, UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs often implement programs in silos without proper coordination among themselves and with the government. This lack of coordination undermines the effectiveness and synergy of interventions targeting gender equality and human rights.

## Lessons Learned:

Reflecting on the above challenges provides valuable lessons for Somalia:

1. **Resilience and Adaptability in Policy Implementation:** The necessity for gender equality initiatives to be resilient and adaptable cannot be overstated. Policies need to be flexible enough to withstand and adapt to unexpected crises, such as armed conflicts or pandemics, ensuring that progress towards gender equality is not derailed by external shocks.
2. **Integration of Gender Equality in Humanitarian Responses:** Gender equality and women's empowerment should be integral to the design and implementation of all humanitarian

responses. This approach ensures that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls are addressed during crises, preventing further marginalization.

3. **Strengthening Local Capacities and Institutions:** Building strong, local institutions with the capacity to uphold gender-responsive governance is crucial. Efforts should focus on enhancing the capabilities of local bodies to enforce laws, implement policies, and provide essential services, even amidst instability.
4. **Comprehensive Support Systems for Vulnerable Populations:** Vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls, require robust support systems that can withstand various challenges. This includes ensuring access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities, which are often disrupted by crises.
5. **Community-Based Approaches:** Employing community-based approaches that engage local leaders and stakeholders can help overcome deeply entrenched patriarchal norms and cultural barriers. These strategies are more likely to gain acceptance and can be more effective in promoting gender equality at the grassroots level.
6. **Enhanced Coordination Among Stakeholders:** Effective coordination among government bodies, international partners, NGOs, and civil society is essential for the success of gender initiatives. A synchronized approach avoids duplication of efforts, optimizes resource use, and ensures that interventions are comprehensive and holistic.
7. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** The importance of reliable, disaggregated data cannot be underestimated. Investing in data collection and research to understand the specific needs and challenges faced by women and girls is crucial for designing effective interventions and policies.
8. **Addressing Socio-Economic Barriers:** Tackling the socio-economic barriers that prevent women and girls from accessing education and economic opportunities is fundamental. Policies should aim to remove these obstacles, which perpetuate gender disparities and hinder women's empowerment.

These reflections and insights from the report underscore that while progress has been notable, significant efforts are still required. Adapting these lessons into ongoing and future strategies will be key to advancing the agenda of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls in Somalia.

## Way Forward

Based on the key challenges identified and lessons learned, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) should prioritize the following areas in 2023-2025 to accelerate the implementation of the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda, notably as part of the Decade of Action for sustainable development:

- **Strengthening Legal and Policy Framework**
  - Review and reform existing laws and policies to ensure they are aligned with international human rights standards and promote gender equality.
  - Develop and implement comprehensive gender equality and women's empowerment policies, with clear targets and accountability mechanisms.
  - Ratify and domesticate key international human rights treaties.
- **Building Institutional Capacity and Governance**



- Invest in strengthening the capacity of government institutions, including the Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development, to effectively formulate, implement, and monitor gender-responsive programs and policies.
- Enhance the capacity of the justice system to uphold the rule of law and ensure the effective enforcement of laws protecting women's rights.
- Promote transparency and accountability in public institutions to improve service delivery.
- **Addressing Harmful Social Norms and Practices**
  - Develop and implement comprehensive public awareness campaigns to challenge and transform deeply entrenched patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes.
  - Engage with religious and traditional leaders to promote their role in advocating for gender equality and the elimination of harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM).
  - Introduce gender-transformative education curricula and teacher training programs to promote gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours.
- **Expanding Access to Education, Economic Opportunities, and Social Services**
  - Prioritize girls' access to quality education, from primary to tertiary levels, and provide scholarships and financial support to enhance their participation and retention.
  - Invest in vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and access to financial services to empower women economically and foster their financial independence.
  - Improve the availability and accessibility of comprehensive healthcare services, including specialized services for women's sexual and reproductive health.
  - Establish and strengthen the network of shelters, legal aid clinics, and psychosocial support services for survivors of gender-based violence.
- **Improving Data Collection and Research:**
  - Develop a robust system for collecting, analysing, and disseminating gender-disaggregated data to inform evidence-based policymaking and program design.
  - Conduct in-depth research to better understand the unique challenges and needs of Somali women and girls, including those facing intersectional forms of discrimination.
  - Encourage and support civil society organizations and academic institutions to engage in gender-focused research and advocacy.
- **Strengthening Coordination and Partnerships:**
  - Establish effective coordination mechanisms among government institutions, UN agencies, INGOs, and local NGOs to ensure coherent, aligned, and complementary interventions on gender equality and human rights.
  - Foster collaboration with the private sector, community-based organizations, and traditional leaders to leverage their expertise and resources in supporting gender-responsive initiatives.

Engage with international donors and development partners to secure sustained funding and technical support for the implementation of the gender equality and human rights agenda.