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Somalia Country Office



National Federal Parliament in time of change and opportunity for Somalia

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Somalia is undergoing a historic process of change, moving towards peace from decades of violent conflict, which ravaged the country and resulted in widespread suffering of its people. On 20 August 2012, the Transitional Road Map ended, and a new chapter in the history of the country began. Since then, a National Federal Parliament, seen as credible and representative, has been established. The first functions of the new parliament were to elect a President and approve the proposed Prime Minister and Cabinet. Critically, the National Federal Parliament has been able to achieve unity and a common vision among MPs for the future of Somalia, and to create a culture of solidarity and commitment through hard work to moving the country out of crisis. These achievements represent a historic breakthrough for Somalia and UNDP has played a central role in ensuring these processes took place smoothly.

Supporting the election of the Speaker and the constitutional process of electing the President of the Republic by the Parliament

Following the gathering of the National Constitutional Assembly and the adoption of the Somali Provisional Constitution, UNDP has actively supported the establishment of the National Federal Parliament. Technical assistance and logistical support has been provided to the process of electing the Speaker and subsequently the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. Procedures and processes have been established through UNDP advisors, and on-going daily assistance provided to the election committee, which oversaw the process.

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UNDP's assistance in setting the procedures and assisting ad-hoc Election Committee, as well as providing ongoing senior advice to key stakeholders, was a key component for the establishment and approval of Somalia's new leadership and Government. On 28 August 2012, the Speaker of Parliament and two Deputy Speakers were elected by the MPs. On 10 September 2012, the House of the People in a peaceful televised secret ballot process elected a new President of Somalia. On 7 October 2012, the President nominated a Prime Minister who, according to the Constitution, selected a Council of Ministers, constituting together the Government/Executive. On 13 November 2012, in accordance with the Constitution, the House of the People formally voted to endorse the Council of Ministers.

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Provision of strategic advice in establishing parliamentary business, developing a committee structure and a parliamentary agenda.

UNDP provided a strategic adviser to the Speaker, responding to the need to include senior international expertise in transitional processes. The advisor helped the Speaker to develop priorities for the early stages of establishing the Parliament, set a process of collaboration between the Parliament and branches of the Executive, agree on a revised structure of committees for the Parliament, support the consultation with international delegations and external relations, conduct a strategic planning process and approve a strategic plan for the Parliament. Support has also been provided to organize the Speaker and his deputies' calendars, priorities and agenda, helping with strategy and focus to achieve the goals and maneuver the first months, with enormous political and security challenges. The advisor has also undertaken the task of preparing the constitutional review plan and submitted it to the Speaker.

Embarking on a process of Strategic Planning for the House of the People

With the support of UNDP advisors and facilitators, the MPs, through a series of debates and working groups led by a committee appointed by the Speaker, discussed their current situation including analyzing the present strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the House in a strategic planning retreat. This was followed by a process to define objectives and goals, and a plan of action to reach them in this time of positive change in Somalia. The three-day retreat was perceived as very successful in building strong relations among the MPs and encouraging them to overcome clan and political divisions for the benefit of peace, stability and development.

Following the retreat, UNDP supported the Ad-hoc Strategic Planning Committee to process information and inputs gathered, and develop a strategic plan. The plan was approved by the Parliament, and constitutes a unifying document that gives guidance to the House to realize its key functions of representing the people of Somalia, developing legislation and overseeing the government. It sets a process to build the Parliament as an institution and for the MPs deliver over the next four years to advance peace, reconciliation and development in Somalia

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Support of development of priority administration capacities and longer term planning

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One of the key challenges of the new National Federal Parliament has been a very weak or non-existing capacity, both in terms of human resources, physical infrastructure and equipment. On the request of the Speaker, UNDP conducted an initial assessment of priority needs and developed a matrix of six-month priorities, which has been shared with international partners. UNDP worked with AWEPA on an assessment of the current staff capacities and outlined a revised structure for the parliament administration. UNDP has followed up with a plan to develop priority administrative capacities, including establishing a merit-based recruitment process and developing an innovative scheme to bring up to 40 young graduates to support the work of the administration and newly established committees. The proposed new structure for the parliament, the plan for priority administration development and the graduate trainee scheme have all been approved by the leadership of the Parliament.

Formation of partnership and collaboration with external partners

UNDP has shown strong commitment to support the newly established Somali institutions, through a conviction that the right level of support and assistance can only be achieved through permanent presence in Mogadishu. UNDP staff have had a regular presence on the ground and the Country Director relocated to Somalia on 2 December 2012 –one of the first of Heads of UN agencies and international partners to do so. This has put UNDP in a position of strong influence with the counterparts, allowing the organization to respond quickly to requests for support (equipment and expertise) and to advise on ongoing processes. The National Federal Parliament has asked for extensive support from UNDP during its four-year mandate, and invited the Country Director to make a speech to the Parliament in recognition of the support provided to UNDP to date.

UNDP's presence on the ground has helped the Parliament to communicate their needs to other partners and ensure that they are aligned around a strategic planning process for the Parliament and the needs arising from it. Following this process monthly coordination meetings between the Parliament and international partners have been established.

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Future support

UNDP has been asked to form a strong partnership with the National Federal Parliament, and is expected by the MPs and the Parliaments leadership to play a leading role in the implementation of the strategic plan of the parliament. The broad support, which is being planned with the counterparts, includes the formation of and support to committees, both on parliamentary procedure and policy work, continued support to the development of Parliamentary administration, supporting priority legislative processes and the collaboration with the executive. It also includes support for the constitutional review, including a broad consultation process, support for constituency outreach and building the relation of parliament with population and the role of the institution in peacebuilding and reconciliation.

KEY FACTS & RESULTS

- Parliament established, including election of Speaker and deputies.
- President of the Somali Republic elected by the Parliament
- Committee structure developed and approved by Parliament
- Parliament planning and visioning retreat held, with majority of MP's in attendance.
- Strategic Plan developed and approved.
- Coordination mechanisms for aid effectiveness established
- An assessment of staff, infrastructure and equipment conducted
- A plan for building priority administrative capacities developed and approved
- Ongoing strategic advice provided to the leadership of the House of the People

"The aspiration of the people of Somalia is...to feel that they are free and part of their own governance. Who can play this role? It starts with the Parliament, because the parliament is representing the people." - Mohamed Osman "Jawari", Speaker of Parliament, Federal Republic of Somalia

CONTACT : Marcin Buzanski, Technical Specialist Parliamentary Development,
marcin.buzanski@undp.org

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