I. Overview

This background note is intended to inform the World Bank’s Interim Strategy Note for Somalia to ensure gender considerations are incorporated into identified operational and analytical priorities. The aim of this analysis is to provide a brief delineation of gender disparities in Somalia through a review of existing literature and interviews with relevant actors and organizations. Findings of this analysis and proposed recommendations reflect consideration for the development priorities outlined within the World Bank’s Operational Policy on Gender and Development (OP/BP 4.2), the Africa Regional Strategy, the WDR 2011 and WDR 2012, previous Bank initiatives within Somalia including the 2006 UN-World Bank Joint Needs Assessment, the resulting Reconstruction and Development Program and the 2007 ISN for Somalia.

Somalia’s development challenges are enormous. Decades of protracted conflict, political instability, persistent drought and famine have disrupted delivery of desperately needed services, devastated human capital and physical infrastructure, and contributed to systematic impoverishment and displacement of the population. While relative stability and administrative coherence in Somaliland and Puntland have enabled modest gains in basic service delivery and recovery initiatives, the absence of functioning central government institutions since 1991, combined with ongoing civil violence with militant factions such as al-Shabaab, have had a damaging impact on human development.

Socio-economic indicators are among the lowest in the world for both males and females and gender disparities are stark. According to the 2012 Human Development Report for Somalia, gender inequality indicators—across health, empowerment and economic measures—are among the worst in the world, following only Yemen Afghanistan, Mali and Papua New Guinea (UNDP 2012). Despite the dynamic role women have historically played in Somali society as community mobilizers and peace-builders, the pre-eminence of religious and customary clan-based systems ascribes women with inferior social status and contributes to women’s exclusion from political and public decision-making fora. Realization and enforce-
ment of human rights are challenged by pervasive religious and traditional practices such as polygamy, early and forced marriage, wife inheritance and FGM/C. Gender-based violence is widespread, with the systematic use of sexual violence and rape a common feature of the ongoing conflict. Women and girls en route to or staying within IDP/refugee camps are particularly vulnerable to assault. Economically, women have made some gains, expanding into employment and livelihood sectors traditionally held by men, particularly as more women assume responsibility for household income generation. Identifying mechanisms to consolidate this expansion and to facilitate further economic advancement, however, particularly in livestock and trade sectors, will be critical for future interventions.

Recent political developments, namely the appointment of a sovereign, post-transition government led by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, present a promising opportunity for the country’s emergence from decades of instability (Menkhaus 2012a). This, combined with military victories over and general weakening of al-Shabaab and other militant forces, culminating in the recent capture of Kismayo by Kenyan and Somali forces (Menkhaus 2012b), raises hopes that Somalia is poised to move into a new phase of stabilization and recovery. The current political and security context is extremely fragile, however, and fraught with a myriad of challenges to the nascent government. As national, regional and international actors begin to investigate ways to engage and support the new government, priority must be placed on the integration of gender considerations across all sectors and all activities. Engendering reconstruction and development, identifying and addressing key gender disparities, barriers or challenges as feasible, will be essential to secure broader internal stability and recovery.

In the context of this note, gender refers to the socially constructed roles of and relationships between women and men. These roles are influenced by variables such as age, race, class and ethnicity, and are mutable over time, subject to learning and evolving contexts. Diagnosis and analysis of gender-based differences has important implications for poverty reduction and sustainable development particularly in the context of persistent instability. Identifying and understanding the unique barriers and opportunities men, women, boys and girls confront helps to ensure that interventions, project activities and analytical work promote equitable realization of economic, political and social gains.

Drawing from these priorities, this analysis attempts to expand the conversation further, investigating factors influencing gender disparities across legal, political, social, economic and cultural categories. The analysis is not comprehensive, but highlights key barriers to gender equity and identifies potential gender-responsive actions to address them in the near-term. One immediate recommendation, therefore, is to undertake more comprehensive social and gender analyses to identify and investigate in greater depth factors underpinning and influencing gender dynamics across multiple sectors. This work should survey and build on the analytical activities already undertaken by other actors, while exploring topics or areas previously unaddressed. A guiding principle of this work should be how best to translate the information gained into concrete, effective operational ideas.

The following note includes a summary of (i) the legal framework and features of political participation, (ii) key gender issues related to human development, as well as economic and livelihoods development, (iii) protection concerns related to sexual and gender-based violence and forced displacement, and (iv) current donor engagement related to gender.

II. Legal Framework and Political Participation

A. National Framework

On August 1, 2012, the National Constituent Assembly approved the new Provisional Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia. Under the General Principles of Human Rights, the constitution articulates provisions prohibiting discrimination across numerous categories, including on the basis on gender. More specifically, Article 11 states, that:

1. All citizens, regardless of sex, religion, social or economic status, political opinion, clan, disability, occupation, birth or dialect shall have equal rights and duties before the law.

2. Discrimination is deemed to occur if the effect of an action impairs or restricts a person’s rights, even if the actor did not intend this effect.

3. Government must not discriminate against any person on the basis of age, race, colour, tribe, ethnicity, culture, dialect, gender, birth, disability, religion, political opinion, occupation or wealth.

4. All government programs, such as laws, or political and administrative actions that are designed to achieve full equality for individuals or groups who are disadvantaged or who have suffered from discrimination in the past, shall not be deemed to be discriminator.

Additionally, the constitution provides for numerous other protections for women. Article 3(5) specifically indicates that “Women must be included in all national institutions, in an effective way, in particular all elected and appointed positions
Article 29 of the Charter did, however, allot 12 percent of seats within the Transitional Federal Parliament to women (Federal Republic of Somalia 2004). Fulfillment and enforcement of this quota went largely unrealized, with female participation in parliament reported at only 6.8 percent (WDI 2012). Notably, the recently appointed cabinet for the new government includes 10 ministers, 2 of whom are women, including the first female appointed to lead the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fowsiyu Haji Aden (UNDP Somalia 2013). However, of the 275 selected members of the new parliament, women still only account for 14 percent (Mohamed 2012). This amount is greater than in years past, but still falls far below the 30 percent originally advanced. According to female parliamentarian, Khadija Mohamed Diriye, “The new constitution gives women more political rights, but the problem is that some tribes have not honoured their promises to political leaders when it comes to giving women their allotted quota in parliament.” (Mohamed 2012)

The movement toward affirmative action quotas connects to broader efforts to improve women’s rights and access to voice in Somali public life. Throughout the varying phases of civil conflict and political instability, women have advocated to occupy a more visible space in political and social spheres. This process, however, is fraught. As mentioned, Somalia is a conservative, patriarchal society that assigns women and girls inferior social and legal status. The traditional clan-based system upon which socio-cultural norms are rooted structurally excludes women from peace building and political decision-making fora. The ‘4.5 Formula’, a clan-based power-sharing scheme, exemplifies this exclusion. The system designates equal quotas for representation to the four major clans with .5 reserved for the 5th clan, which is a composite of minority groups (UN INTRAW 2008). Several authors argue that the 4.5 formula is male-biased and disadvantages women occupying inferior positions within the clan, as women will be passed over for positions in favor of more powerful members of the clan (Dini and Osoble 2011). Other barriers, such as prohibitive campaign finance costs deter women from contesting in elections locally and nationally (Maxamuud 2011). Of the women who have successfully secured political positions, few may have the formal education or technical experience to carry out effectively the mandate and duties of their office.

Despite these restrictions, however, women have historically still played a dynamic, albeit under-valued, role in peace promotion and peace-making. At the community level, women have acted in accordance with their traditional role as domestic interlocutors mediating confrontations across family and clan divisions. At the national level, women have employed a variety of activities to influence decision-making and support peace processes. These activities include, “formal presentation to warring parties, demonstrations, direct action, petition-
ing of politicians, and elders, and provision of logistical and financial support to peace processes.” (Gardner and El Bushra 2004) They have advocated, with varying degrees of success, for positions at international peace conferences such as the Arta Conference in Djibouti and the Mbgathi conference in Kenya (Jama 2011). Within the Arta conference in particular, advocates for women’s rights vied for the inclusion of women as members of the “Sixth Clan,” emphasizing women’s membership in Somali society transcending clan divisions. Women were granted 25 seats at the conference to be divided equally amongst clans according to the 4.5 Formala (Jama 2011). Women’s associations and organizations have proliferated since independence in 1960, contributing to a vibrant civil society in Somalia and playing a central role in the delivery of essential services including healthcare, education and trade (UN INSTRAW 2008). While Somali women still suffer from systematic exclusion from the public domain, these incremental developments continue to coalesce to create new space for women’s participation in political and social life.

The complex interaction between multiple justice institutions and traditional social and cultural norms in Somalia contributes to the suppression of women’s individual rights in favor of patriarchal and communal priorities. Legal pluralism is a defining feature of Somalia’s legal system with three main sources of law: customary, clan-based law (Xeer), Islamic Shari’a law, and secular law grounded in colonial and post-independence frameworks.

Clan affiliations are an important characteristic of local culture and play a critical role in delineating men’s and women’s roles in Somali society. Customary traditions and conventions help to define rights and obligations between kin, clans and subclasses. (‘Shuke’ 2010). Somali customary law effectively treats women as legal minors and limits their rights in the public domain, effectively excluding them from political and judicial structures (Gardner 2007). According to customary law, compensation for crimes against women is usually half of what is paid to men (UN INSTRAW 2008).

Comparatively, Islamic law theoretically affords women more rights than customary systems, recognizing equality of men and women before the law (UNICEF Somalia 2002). Under Shari’a law, women have access to judicial systems, the right to property and to inherit, and the right to education and training. Furthermore, customary law is often perceived as undermining the primacy of Shari’a law. For example, one report describes how Xeer laws circumvent Shari’a law with respect to women’s inheritance, denying women ownership of land, camels and other assets in order to protect the property of the patriarchal line (UNICEF Somalia 2002).

In practice, however, Shari’a law can only be administered by men and there is evidence of its misapplication in accordance with social norms and values that ultimately favor men (Gardner 2007). For example, the Islamic Courts that gained control of Mogadishu in 2006 instituted a strict application of Shari’a law, banning among other practices women’s appearance in public without a male relative (UN INSTRAW 2008). Shari’a law also generally reasserts women’s social duty to maintain the household and care for the family (UNICEF Somalia 2002).

Secular judicial structures are not necessarily more effective in protecting women as they are similarly governed by traditional cultural systems that seek to preserve social stability between communities and families over an individual’s rights. Family elders may attempt to delay or withdraw cases reported to the police to enable time for families to negotiate appropriate compensation for violations. Families may further attempt to exert pressure on judges to rule in accordance with local practices and values (Chopra 2011). Court determinations therefore often reflect and uphold deeply entrenched patriarchal norms that ultimately disadvantage women.

III. Key Gender Issues

A. Human Development

Somalia has an estimated population of over 9.6 million people with 62 percent of the population living in rural areas compared to 38 percent in urban areas (WGI 2011). Just over half of the total population is female. Somalia is a young country with over 70 percent of the population under the age of 30 (UNDP 2012). Prolonged conflict and instability, combined recurrent drought and flooding, have had a devastating impact on the country’s social and economic development. Disparities between rural and urban areas are pronounced. According to the 2012 HDR, GDP per capita is $284, with an incidence of poverty of 73 percent (61 percent in urban centers and 80 percent in rural areas) (UNDP 2012). Only 7 percent of the rural population enjoys access to improved water sources, in contrast to 66 percent of people living in urban areas (WGI 2010). Nationally, only 23 percent of the population has access to sanitation facilities, with access rates of 52 percent in urban centers and only 6 percent in rural environments (WGI 2010). Out of 170 countries, Somalia ranks among the bottom five least developed countries as measured

5 Socio-economic data is of variable quality and reliability and there appears to be a lack of consistency in figures used across institutions. Population statistics commonly cited by UN agencies fall significantly lower at 7.5 million, reflecting UNDP estimates from 2005. UN agency rates and measures cited in this analysis may reflect this lower population figure.
by UNDP’s HDI index (UNDP 2012).

According to the Food Security and Nutritional Analysis Unit’s (FSNAU) assessment of the post-Gu rainy season in 2012, the food security and nutritional status of a large portion of the Somali population continue to improve as the country recovers from the devastating famine formally declared in 2011 (FSNAU 2012c). The report indicated a 16 percent reduction in the population in acute food security crisis, declining from over 4 million to 2.12 million. While the improvements are significant, the remaining affected population still requires immediate, ongoing humanitarian assistance for survival. An additional 1.7 million people, though technically no longer in crisis, remain vulnerable to a return to crisis if not provided some form of livelihoods support. (OCHA 2012a/FSNAU 2012c). Of the 2.12 million, 38 percent are IDPs, who are among the most vulnerable populations. Women and children are also disproportionately affected, accounting for 70-80 percent of those considered to be in acute food security crisis (UNDP 2012).

The collapse of the Somali state in 1991 resulted in the disappearance of formal education systems, leaving most children without an opportunity to receive an education (UNDP 2012). This has had a dramatic impact on education indicators to date and has exacerbated severe gender disparities in literacy and enrolment. Nearly 75 percent of females between 15-24 are illiterate (MICS 2006; UNDP 2012). National gross enrolment rates are estimated to be 31 percent, with a GER of only 22 percent for girls as compared with 34 percent of boys (UNICEF 2011b). Secondary school participation falls even lower for both boys and girls, with net attendance ratios of 12 and 8 percent respectively (UNICEF 2012).

As with other socio-economic indicators, education statistics are generally higher and more readily available in Somaliland and Puntland as compared with South Central Somalia. Primary school surveys carried out in both regions examined education data across nearly all formal primary schools, Alternative Basic Education systems and Integrated Quaranic Schools. Gross enrolment rates for Somaliland in 2011-12 were reported at 44 percent, with a GER of 50 percent for boys and 38 percent for girls. (Ministry of Education and Higher Education 2012). In Puntland, the Ministry of Education reported a GER of 41 percent, with 46 percent for boys and 37 percent for girls. These figures reflect a slight but significant 3 percent increase in enrolment rates since 2006/7. A similar primary school survey was not conducted for Central South Somalia, however, as noted, available national enrolment statistics are lower than in either northern zone, likely reflecting poor education conditions in the South Central region.

In Somaliland, the gender gap among teachers is severe. Female teachers account for only 16 percent of all teachers in the region. Similarly, although the cohort of teachers in Puntland has increased since 2006, females still account for only 18 percent of total teachers—(Ministry of Education 2012). Additionally, out of 900 qualified teachers (possessing at least a teaching diploma) only 122, or 14 percent, were female. Qualified teachers tend to be concentrated in urban environments, underscoring both the need to recruit more qualified personnel in general (and female personnel in particular) and to implement reforms encouraging deployment of qualified teachers to more remote areas. (Ministry of Education 2012). Increasing the number of qualified female teachers may also present one mechanism to increasing female enrollments rates as part of a broader strategy to improve conditions and facilities for female students.

Barriers to education include limited or unavailable operational primary and secondary facilities, prohibitive school fees, and household demands. Girls in particular are less likely to attend school due to domestic responsibilities, especially in female-headed households in which mother’s pursue economic opportunities and require additional support in the home. The 2012 HDR reports that with the potential onset of political stability and improved security conditions, Somalia will likely witness an increase in demand for education services, which will put pressure on already limited facilities and capacity. There is a need for expanding operational spaces and resources and improving overall access while also ensuring quality and relevance for future transitions to livelihoods and employment (UNDP 2012).

The overall health status of men and women in Somalia, including access to services, is extremely poor. Infant mortality rates are estimated to be 108 deaths per 1,000 live births, while under 5 mortality rates are 180 per 1,000 live births. Both statistics are unchanged since 1990 (UNICEF 2012). Life expectancy at birth is 51 years (UNICEF 2011b). Although reported rates for HIV/AIDS prevalence is low at .7 percent, misconceptions regarding transmission, protection and healthy practices, combined with the early age at which young men and women first have sexual intercourse (15 years of age for many), underscore the need for expansion of sensitization and awareness raising campaigns (UNDP 2012 and WHO/UNFPA 2009).

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6 Figures from the Primary School Census surveys in both Somaliland and Puntland are based on the UNDP population projection estimates for 2011 incorporating a 3 percent projected growth rate from the 2005 data. Education statistics may not therefore present accurate figures. A population census is apparently planned for 2013 to be conducted by UNDP, UNICEF and other partners. (Ministry of Education and Higher Education 2012)

7 One potentially dangerous belief held by Somali youth is that female circumcision can prevent transmission of HIV (UNDP 2012).
Barriers to health care provision and services in Somalia include insufficient and poor facilities, inaccessibility, prohibitive costs (related both to services and transport), insufficient implementation capacities and constraints to service delivery arising from ongoing conflict and instability. As of 2009, there were an estimated 625 health posts and 225 maternal and child health centers in Somalia (UNICEF 2009a). Assuming a population of 9.6 million, this amounts just one health post per 15,200 people. Existing services appear to be largely provided by the private sector, including pharmacies and drug stores, which may account for high service fees. Individuals also reportedly seek services provided by traditional and religious healers (UNICEF 2009a).

Estimates for maternal mortality (MMR) are extremely high at 1,200 per 100,000 live births (UNICEF 2008). The MMR for Somalia is actually likely to be even higher given that 90 percent of deliveries take place in the home and are therefore not recorded (WHO/UNFPA 2009). Key causes of maternal deaths likely include ante- and postpartum hemorrhage, obstructed labor, hypertensive disorders, and sepsis and infections (WHO/UNFPA 2009). Other reproductive health indicators present an equally grim picture and contribute to the high maternal mortality rates. A high fertility rate at 6.3 aligns with low contraception prevalence (15 percent), resulting in poor birth spacing, which increases risks to mothers. (WHO 2012). Teenage pregnancy is common. The fertility rate of girls between the ages 15-19 years having their first child is 123 per 1,000 (MICS 2006). Only 9 percent of pregnant women are attended by skilled health personnel during birth, while only 6 percent receive antenatal care (of 4+ visits) (WHO 2012). There is a total absence of decent emergency obstetric care in Somalia, which further contributes to death and disability of women of reproductive age (WHO/UNFPA 2009).

Socio-cultural factors play a further significant role in the health status of women in Somalia. Family planning decisions, e.g. access to contraceptives, may be restricted and subject to consent of husbands and in the case of contraceptives may in part account for low national contraceptive prevalence rates (4.6 percent in Somaliland and 1 percent in Puntland) (MICS 2006). Responsibility for decisions related to health-seeking behavior, such as when to travel to clinic for treatment, may reside with male members of the household and contribute to delays in seeking care. Early marriage is considered a significant factor in high maternal mortality rates, as it leads to early age of first pregnancy. FGM/C in particular is a deeply entrenched, near universal, cultural practice in Somalia, with 98 percent of women between the ages of 15-49 having undergone either Type II or Type III FGM/C. In Somalia, 80-90 percent of women have undergone Type III FGM/C, or infibulation.8 FGM/C, particularly the practice of Type III, infibulation, is a likely factor contributing obstructed labor and fistulas, which dramatically impacts maternal health in Somalia.9 Infections also arise as infibulation necessitates additional incisions to be made to widen the vaginal opening in preparation for birth. Additional long-term health consequences include infibulation cysts, scar formation, urinary incontinence (if the urethra is damaged), sexual dysfunction, and difficult childbirth (World Bank/UNFPA 2005). Female victims of sexual violence are further exposed to risk of infection as perpetrators use knives, sharpened metal or other devices to cut or re-open infibulations scars during rape.

Notably, the new provisional constitution legally bans the practice in Somalia, stating, “Circumcision of girls is a cruel and degrading customary practice, and is tantamount to torture. The circumcision of girls is prohibited.” (Federal Republic of Somalia 2012) Whether this injunction translates into enforcement and concrete legal action is not yet known. There is also a risk that without proper education, awareness raising and community engagement, the outright prohibition of the practice may serve to drive the practice underground rather than eradicate it. In Puntland as well, a law banning Pharonic—or Type III infibulation—was passed in 2011. However the law still allows for other forms of circumcision (UNDP Somalia 2012).

B. Economic Development/Livelihoods Development

Decades of conflict in Somalia, compounded with recurring drought and famine, have precipitated significant shifts in gender roles and dynamics particularly as related to the household economy. Agriculture is the most important source of food and income in Somalia, with particular emphasis on livestock and livestock products. 4.2 million people are pastoralists or agro-pastoralists, occupying 26 out of 33 defined livelihoods zones in the country (FSNAU 2012c). Livestock and livestock trade account for 40 percent of Somalia’s GDP and over 50 percent of export earnings (UNDP 2012). Protracted conflict and drought have resulted in a shift away from pastoralism, as populations adopt new livelihood strategies to cope with external stresses. In particular, populations have increased crop production activities, while migration to urban centers to find alternate livelihoods is common. Unemployment rates are

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8 According to WHO, Type III FGM/C entails “Excision of part or all of the external genitalia and stitching/narrowing of the vaginal opening (infibulation).” (UNFPA: http://www.unfpa.org/gender/practices2.htm)

9 In 2005 the World Bank, in conjunction with UNFPA, conducted an assessment of FGM/C eradication programs in Somalia in order to guide future programming. Among other recommendations, the report advocated for the integration of FGM/C eradication initiatives into reproductive health, education, social protection and rural development strategies.
While family splitting may be a common coping strategy, prolonged exposure to conflict and recurring droughts has extended separation beyond traditional limits and necessitated women to adopt new, more expansive roles as income earners, particularly if separation becomes permanent. The extended absence of males, whether due to conflict or abnormal migration, has resulted in a significant number of female-headed households, as well as households in which women become the primary or contributing breadwinners for the family. There are positive and negative implications associated with this shift. On the one hand, Somali women are becoming increasingly active in non-traditional economic activities such as livestock trading and marketing activities in multiple sectors (Ibrahim 2004). An assessment of livelihoods activities in Baidoa revealed that women occupy 20 percent of the unskilled labor within the construction sector and 70 percent of petty trade (FSNAU 2012b).

Women's associations across sectors are common and women managing small business enterprises, which are relatively few, are also now apparently organizing themselves into traditional savings and credit groups to support their ventures (Gardner 2004). Women are also assuming further responsibility for key household decisions, for example as related to income use and expenditures. These changes, and women's overall increased economic empowerment, appear to have had a positive impact on perceptions of women's status in Somali society (Gardner 2004). Consolidating the benefits of women's expanding engagement in the economic sphere, and determining how to leverage those advances into broader efforts toward gender equity, will be critical and should be one objective of any targeted livelihood or employment interventions.

Available economic opportunities, however, are still quite limited for both men and women and female-headed households remain among the most vulnerable populations. Women, particularly female IDPs, are still reliant on charity through social protection mechanisms such as zakat, and contributions from the Diaspora in the form of remittances. The unemployment rate for females is higher in Somalia than for males, at 74 percent as compared with 61 percent respectively (UNDP 2012). Gender gaps in income persist as well, with men receiving higher wages for informal work, for example, in construction than women similarly engaged in casual employment (FSNAU 2012c). Also, while women have been moving into economic terrain previously dominated by men, there has been little to no shift in men's participation in domestic tasks. Women are therefore bearing the double domestic burden of earning an income and taking care of the home. The consequences of this burden often fall to girls in the family, who are expected to contribute to the maintenance of the home, often at the expense of education and skills development.

10 Zakat refers to the obligatory annual contribution required under Islamic law that is used for charitable and religious purposes.
Additionally, there is an incomplete understanding of the impact of the shifting gender ideologies and how these changing gender dynamics affect men’s sense of identity and self in Somali society, as well as their productive capacity overall. Unemployment is pervasive in Somalia and job prospects for men, particularly in urban centers, are shattered. The emergence and reliance on women as income earners and breadwinners has transformed traditional male identity as men fail to fulfill their main responsibilities as provider and protector. Reports indicate that some men are accepting of this transformation and willing to relinquish control over family income (Ibrahim 2004).

There is evidence, however, that changing gender roles in Somalia is a significant source of stress and distress. Evidence in other countries has demonstrated that men may feel threatened by women’s increasing economic empowerment and this may lead to increased violence against women. Greater attention should be paid to examining the unique needs and challenges affecting men and boys, how to address them and how to advance constructive alternative models of positive male identity in Somali society.

Particular attention should be given to identifying mechanisms to promote and empower Somali youth. Unemployment and the absence of sustainable livelihoods opportunities present a significant challenge in Somalia, particularly when 70 percent of the population falls under the age of 30. Expanding youth populations, with little education and training, are exerting extreme pressure on already saturated labor markets, as they confront limited opportunities for earning an income. Unskilled, uneducated youth populations are most vulnerable to economic shocks and least likely to find work in the formal economy, and the absence of educational and job opportunities may heighten inequalities and impede poverty alleviation efforts. Frustrated ambitions and feelings of deprivation may further contribute to a breakdown in community participation and social cohesion and may leave youth populations vulnerable to mobilization into criminal activities, including participation in gangs, drugs and other illicit networks such as piracy. Evidence has indicated, for example, that idle, uneducated and/or unemployed youth populations are ready targets for radicalization and recruitment into militant groups such as al-Shabaab. As described by an ex-Somali pirate, “After completing secondary education, I was unable to continue due to poverty. I had to look for a job, but could not find one. Because of this frustration, I was lured into piracy in August 2009. I saw some of my friends leading luxurious lives with money from piracy and that was another attraction” (UNDP 2012). Interventions targeting youth empowerment and employment will therefore be essential for ensuring inclusive growth and broader regional stability.

C. Protection

i. Sexual and Gender Based Violence

Sexual and gender-based violence constitutes a significant protection concern throughout Somalia. Incidents of sexual and physical violence are widespread and may be rising, although insufficient information is available measuring prevalence and extent. Patriarchal religious and cultural practices persist including polygamy, wife inheritance, early and forced marriages, and abduction. Deeply entrenched traditional views assigning women secondary status in Somali society, combined with shifting, disempowered male identities exacerbated by the absence of viable income generating opportunities and reportedly high rates of Khat use, are factors negatively influencing the treatment of women, particularly in the home. Domestic violence is widespread, though unreported, and generally regarded as an accepted practice.

Human trafficking has been described as serious, largely under-acknowledged challenge in Somalia. Somaliland and Puntland have both been identified as sources of transit, destination and origin for both internal and international victims of trafficking, with many transiting to countries such as Ethiopia, Djibouti, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the UAE (IOM 2011). Ongoing conflict, heightened vulnerability, poverty and displacement and the absence of rule of law have created enabling conditions for international trafficking through South Central Somalia (IOM 2011). Victims are frequently women and girls and they are often subjected to forced labor, prostitution or sexual slavery, and organ removal (IOM 2011 and UNHCR 2012).

Several organizations described dramatic increases in reported GBV incidents in recent years, likely resulting from deteriorating security conditions, as well as increased vulnerability and displacement due to famine and drought. Introduction of more effective assessment and reporting tools, particularly in IDP/refugee camps, may also account for the rise. A UN OCHA report described that GBV cases in South Central Somalia quadrupled between January – July 2011, jumping from 86 cases during the same period in 2010 to 332 incidents in 2011 (UN OCHA 2011). In September of 2012 alone, 277 cases of sexual violence were reported in Mogadishu, of which 237 were rape (UNDP Somalia 2013).

Several reports describe gang rape by male youth as a com-

11 Interview with IOM, 5 February 2013.
12 An interview with UNCHR (7 February 2013) revealed that a new GBV Information management system has begun to capture some data regarded domestic violence, creating a better picture of its pervasiveness. The GBV IMS is discussed further below.
mon feature of sexual violence in Somalia. (UNFPA and IOM 2010) In certain nomadic groups, abduction and rape are also common and women/girls may not be allowed to return to her family until she is pregnant with her first child (Musse 2004). As in other countries, rape carries a strong cultural stigma and can lead to rejection of victims by their families or communities. Traditional clan-based structures are supposed to provide protections against sexual and physical assault as male members are bound by duty to protect the honor and status of women within their clan (Ibrahim 2004). Survivors of violence may be reluctant to report or seek services due to fear of stigmatization or rejection or due to a lack of awareness of available options for care.

In the context of the ongoing conflict in Somalia, rape has also been used as a targeted mechanism by hostile clans to destabilize, destroy and displace populations, to build fear, to humiliate and to disempower local communities and clans. Women are raped in front of their husbands to underscore the inability of these men to fulfill their traditional role as protectors. In the face of large-scale, systematic rape, customary and formal mechanisms for redress are insufficient or have eroded due to conflict, migration and general displacement. A culture of impunity prevails as there is limited legal recourse for survivors of violence. Somali customary systems are oriented around mechanisms for communal reconciliation as families seek redress through compensation (or diya) or by exacting revenge. Emphasis is placed on preservation of social cohesion and pacification rather than on punishing perpetrators. Social pressure to resolve disputes through these structures is high as families of survivors may fear stigma as well as the loss of opportunities for compensation if alternate channels are sought (Chopra 2011). In many cases these mechanisms also give way to alternate social negotiations. Rape and sexual assault may be used as an avenue to initiate marriage while circumventing high bride prices. In Somali culture, the value of a daughter is in part ascribed to the bride wealth she can bring to her father’s family upon marriage. In the event of rape, however, a girl’s family may attempt to negotiate bride prices down in order to secure marriage and minimize social stigma.

Access to alternative mechanisms for justice is limited. Legal aid services may be inadequate, while many women lack sufficient financial resources to afford them in the first place. Cases reported to police or filed with the courts may be withdrawn by families mandating treatment through customary systems. As mentioned, structures of justice, including police or judges, may be influenced by clan affiliations, traditional or political authorities or other social norms. Several reports further note that judges often refer cases of violence back to customary networks for adjudication.

Survivors of GBV face a number of impediments in access to services or justice. These include, among others, (i) prevailing cultural attitudes, stigma, shame and fear preventing survivors from reporting SGBV or seeking care, (ii) high costs associated with medical care combined with limited availability, (iii) limited access to confidential reporting mechanisms, and (iv) breakdown or absence of traditional or statutory structures within communities to seek redress, particularly within displaced populations.

As indicated, the evidence base measuring prevalence and extent is poor. Barriers to proper collection of data include insecurity, restricted access and inadequate capacity for data collection. Additionally, local actors have been discouraged and threatened against reporting specific dimensions of GBV data, resulting in a dearth of usable information (UN OCHA 2011). The recent, highly publicized arrest and sentencing of a woman who filed a rape claim against state security services, and of the journalist who reported her claim, has raised serious concerns that institutional and community intimidation will further discourage survivors and associated service organizations from reporting information related to sexual assault. Importantly, a consortium of UN agencies and organizations have developed and launched a GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) to address these challenges and to improve collection and reporting of cases of GBV. Information collected through the IMS will support analysis of trends and patterns of violence and may ultimately be used to improve prevention, mitigation and response programming as well as targeted advocacy and awareness campaigns. The system was launched in 2011. Despite initial challenges with the roll out process, usable data for analysis are now beginning to emerge.

**ii. Displacement**

Displacement and forced migration constitute a significant...
development challenge in Somalia. UNHCR estimates that between January and July 2012, 22,000 people per month were displaced. Of those, 70 percent were displaced due to insecurity (FSNAU 2012c). Most recent estimates from UNHCR indicate that 1.1 million people are currently displaced internally, the majority of whom are located in South Central Somalia (UNICEF Somalia 2012). Between October and December 7, 2012, 89 percent of recorded new displacements (16,000 out of 18,000) occurred in South Central Somalia (UNHCR 2012b). UNHCR has registered just over 1 million Somali refugees in the region, the majority of whom are in camps in Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen (UNHCR Data Portal 2012). Motivations driving movement both internally and across borders include escape from insecurity resulting from conflict, hardship and dislocation resulting from drought and famine and lack of access to livelihoods or broader economic opportunities (Jureidini 2010).

Major protection constraints affecting organizations like humanitarian institutions include volatile security conditions, lack of access to affected populations, and insufficient resources to meet the full extent of needs. Insurgent forces have regularly impeded access to local populations. In November 2011, for example, al-Shabaab ejected 16 humanitarian organizations operating within its area of control, forcing agencies to work through national partner networks, while in Puntland, foreign aid workers are frequently targeted for abduction (UNHCR 2012a). As such, displaced populations have limited access to much needed humanitarian support and are among the most vulnerable and disempowered in the country. Of the estimated 2.1 million people to be facing acute food crisis, roughly 800,000 were IDPs (UN OCHA 2012a). Factors contributing to vulnerability include dislocation from homes and clan support systems, lack of adequate shelter, loss of assets and means to livelihoods, and in the case of South Central Somalia, the absence of credible rule of law institutions such as police and security forces.

Conditions confronting female IDPs are particularly precarious. Women and girls comprise a significant proportion of displaced populations. Some reports have described that 50-60 percent of IDP households are headed by women (UNICEF 2011a), while others have suggested that 70-80 percent of IDPs and refugees are women and children (UNDP 2012). Husbands or male relatives may have either died or been recruited by armed groups during the course of ongoing conflict. Families may have also adopted a family splitting strategy, migrating separately in search of livelihood or economic opportunities.

Both male and female IDPs struggle to earn and income and rely heavily on humanitarian assistance, charity or social protection mechanisms, such as zakat, for survival. Reports indicate, however, that female-headed households within eight surveyed IDP camps were more charity-dependent than male-headed households, relying primarily on zakat or gifting (FSNAU 2012c). IDPs transitioning from a pastoral existence may have lost all or some access to all assets such as livestock herds, and therefore must adopt alternative livelihood strategies. While male appear to be more dependent on casual labor, women appear to be more involved in petty trade (FSNAU 2012c).

Among the numerous challenges already facing female IDPs and refugees, displacement heightens women and girls’ vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence, as experienced both en route to and within settlement camps. An IRC assessment reported that women and girls in transit to Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya were often victims of sexual and physical violence, frequently targeted by bandits and armed groups along the way (IRC 2011).

Within IDP and refugee settlements, women and girls are further exposed to various forms of violence. Location of shelters is often liminal and unplanned, while construction is usually makeshift and therefore insufficient to provide any protection or security. An FSNAU survey conducted in 2012 revealed that female-headed households in IDP camps were more likely to have homes constructed from corrugated metal roofs (FSNAU 2012b). Several reports indicate that armed groups frequently break into camps and rape or abduct women and girls directly from their tukuls or tents (IRC 2011). Traveling long distances to collect firewood or to distribution points for water, food or other materials further exposes women and girls to the potential for sexual and physical assault (Abdi 2011).

**Donor Engagement on Gender in Somalia**

Interviews with a selection of donor representatives revealed a keen interest in and active engagement on gender issues in Somalia. While several donors such as the European Union, DFID and Denmark have been actively supporting gender activities by channeling dedicated funds either through UN partners or other implementing organizations, several others, such as Norway and Sweden, are still in the process of clarifying or re-orienting their gender programs and priorities. Such donors also direct funds through partner organizations, such as UNDP, for programs that may have some impact on gender issues, but the funding has not necessarily been targeted to

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15 Agencies and organizations interviewed included: UNDP, UNHCR, UN Women, UNFPA, UN OCHA, FSNAU/FAO, and IOM, as well as representatives from Sweden, the United Kingdom/DFID, USAID, the European Union, Norway, Denmark, and SAACID.
promote gender-specific outcomes. The following summary provides a snapshot of some key donors’ engaged in Somalia, outlining current initiatives or intended areas of focus moving forward.

• **The United Kingdom – DFID**’s current operational strategy for Somalia extends from 2011-2015 and is comprised of four main pillars including governance and peacebuilding, wealth and job creation, health (with an emphasis on women and girls) and humanitarian assistance. The strategy outlines a strong focus on women and girls, including family planning support, skills development, access to justice and reducing incidence of FGM/C. DFID is generally reducing its commitment in education programming as part of a harmonization strategy with the EC (which has a strong focus on education, while DFID has stronger focus on health initiatives). However, DFID has launched the Girls Education Challenge Fund in Somalia as one of 8 target countries and is funding 15-16 projects supporting girls’ education as implemented by NGOs such as Relief International and Care.

DFID is also working to expand its focus on programming related to SGBV, currently financing a number of initiatives including support for medical treatment programs, training of police in Somaliland, and support for legal aid services and the training of female lawyers. DFID also supports operations of the Baahi-Koob Center, a multi-sectoral sexual assault referral center (previously known as SARC) housed within Hargesia Group Hospital. DFID also intends to host a break out meeting on SGBV as part of its broader London Conference on Somalia in May 2013.

Additionally, the **UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office** highlights Somalia as one of the target countries for its Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, as launched by the Foreign Secretary in 2012. The initiative aims to prevent sexual violence in conflict-affected countries as a key facet of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The initiative includes the establishment of team of 73 dedicated specialists available for rapid deployment to conflict-affected areas to collect evidence and testimony to support investigations and prosecutions of incidents of sexual violence. Additional activities include providing support for survivors and witnesses, as well as working to build the capacity of civil society and local institutions to prevent, mitigate and respond to SGBV. This initiative constitutes a priority component of the UK’s Presidency of the G8.

• **Sweden** is in the process of developing its overarching 5-year strategy for Somalia and is exploring entry points for engagement on gender. As with DFID, Sweden has previously contributed significantly to health initiatives and will likely continue to do so moving forward. SIDA has also provided humanitarian support through UN OCHA and funding for a variety of projects with UNDP, including support for programs with gender components (e.g. the Governance, Rule of Law and Security, and Poverty Reduction and Environmental Protection projects). Future gender programming will likely entail a combination of mainstreaming initiatives and stand-alone projects, however specific activities have not yet been identified. In order to inform the development of the strategic program, Sweden has conducted a mapping on gender and security issues in Somalia (as well as a mapping of gender-related reports). This mapping identifies key issues and knowledge gaps while also outlining proposals for possible areas of engagement. Potential priority areas include political participation and decision-making, SGBV and FGM/C and implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325.

• **The European Union** funds a variety of gender-targeted initiatives and maintains a dedicated gender unit in Nairobi. The unit has recently sponsored an audit of gender activities sponsored by the EU as well as those implemented by partner organizations. The intention is to roll into an update of a Gender Profile developed in 2007 to ensure implementation activities and strategies are realistic and properly grounded in the context of the country.

Projects funded by the EU address varying dimension of gender including economic growth and empowerment, as well as peace and security. In 2012 the EU launched a call for proposals for projects supporting gender equity and women’s economic empowerment, with an overall budget of over €2 million. Projects awarded thus far focus on minority groups’ rights, SGBV, economic empowerment, livelihood, capacity building and political representation. One project awarded under this financing vehicle to Danish Refugee Council (DRC) includes implementation of an initiative targeting justice and economic empowerment activities for survivors of gender-based violence in Hargesia. The EU currently supports a number of other projects with gender implications across multiple sectors. As mentioned the EU is the lead donor for education activities in Somalia. The EU also funds several projects targeting vocational training and employment for youth, including a focus in particular on disadvantaged youth and women to reduce vulnerability.

• **Denmark**: Denmark currently channels direct funding
for targeted gender initiatives through UNDP’s gender program. Key areas of focus include fostering leadership and political participation, promoting economic and social rights, improving legal and policy frameworks for women’s political representation and access to justice, and prevention of violence against women (SGBV and FGM/C). Specific activities among others include: provision of scholarships to tertiary institutions in non-traditional sectors (e.g. science, technology and medicine); identifying and building the capacity of gender champions at the policy level; advocating for application and fulfillment of gender quotas for representation within government institutions across all three regions while also building the capacity of elected women to fulfill their responsibilities of office; formulating an economic empowerment study addressing key constraints such as access to finance, land tenure and inheritance issues and entrepreneurship and business skills development; and support for Baahi-Koob. The gender unit is also responsible for mainstreaming gender within other UNDP projects and across the country team in general.

- USAID is also in the process of reworking its framework for operations in Somalia, although programming will likely still fall in alignment with the current stabilization framework. Gender issues are mainstreamed throughout the portfolio of projects, with gender-specific activities incorporated within ongoing interventions. There is no stand-alone gender project, however as the agency re-evaluates its operational strategy, consideration is being given to potential gender-specific projects. Under the current portfolio, gender support has included increasing enrolment rates of girls in secondary schools and non-formal education programs, vocational training and job/internship placements, increasing political participation in traditional assemblies and governance structures, providing support for female leaders seeking advance degrees in peace and security, micro-credit and business skills training for women-led businesses, herd replenishment for female pastoralists, improving access of mothers and children to basic health packages and support for female civil protection officers. Under USAID’s Transition Initiatives for Stabilization (TIS) program, 50 percent cash-for-work grants were distributed to female beneficiaries while women also participated in the community-driven design process for TIS activities. USAID is also working with UN Women and the Somali Youth Development Network to test the effectiveness of trauma healing and social reconciliation workshops for communities in Mogadishu ultimately to reduce violence against women and girls.

Norway To date, the majority of Norwegian funding for Somalia has been directed toward humanitarian aid efforts, with over NOK 600 million, for example, dedicated to humanitarian support in 2011 at the peak of the famine. Norway’s funding portfolio does not appear to have an explicit gender focus, although given the high proportion of women and children affected by the humanitarian crisis, there is a strong probability that funding has had impact effects on gender-relevant indicators. Norway has also funded a number of partner organizations that do have programs with embedded gender activities including UNDP’s series of projects related to Rule of Law, Governance, and Poverty Reduction and Environmental Protection (PREP). Norwegian Church Aid has worked with local organizations to promote women’s empowerment both in productive activities as well as in decision-making, both in public spheres and in the home. A program evaluation report reviewing in Gedo, Puntland and Mogadishu between 2008 and 2010 reported improvements in women’s participation in community development initiatives (NCA 2010). Initiatives have also included working with local religious leaders to discourage practice of FGM/C.
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