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## **NED-FUNDED PROGRAMME ON DEMOCRACY, RULE-OF-LAW, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

### **MOBILISATION WORKSHOP FOR THE TARGETED DISTRICTS**

**20-21 June 2006**

#### **Summary**

NED has agreed to partner SAACID in promoting democratic principals in the Somali context – particularly the city of Mogadishu, which has historically been the capital of the country.

The proposal was developed in the context of prevailing warlordism in the central and southern part of Somalia. SAACID believed that the education and development of grassroots communities in democratic principles and adherence to the rule-of-law would influence those communities toward an effective opposition of the lawless warlordism that was prevailing.

In the interim period between writing and implementation, US-backed warlords clashed with Islamic court's militiamen and the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) expelled those warlords from the city. The UIC now militarily control the city and are also claiming a judicial, governance and economic monopoly over the city and central Somalia.

It remains unclear if this programme can continue in the current milieu, but SAACID desires to continue to see how much space it can reclaim for civil authority and civil society.

One of the outputs for the programme was to hold 4 workshops in 4 targeted districts (there are 16 districts in the city of Mogadishu) on democracy, rule-of-law, conflict management and conflict resolution. If successful, these workshops were to act as a precursor to the development of a conflict resolution centre in each of the 4 targeted districts; to solve localised problems in a collective manner; and to act as a first step to the establishment of civil law-and-order functions on a district-based model.

SAACID believes that even if the programme cannot move to the formal establishment of the 4 conflict resolution centres, there is still genuine benefit in carrying through with many of the programme elements – including the workshops – as they will help to education the population to alternatives to totalitarian theocracy.

This workshop focuses upon mobilising the local leaders of the 4 targeted district-based workshops.

## **Introduction**

Subsequent to statehood collapse, the country's jurisprudence came to a standstill and all three traditions that Somali law drew upon - i.e. traditional and customary law, Islamic Sharia law, and 'Western' rule-of-law - became completely obsolete. Although all three traditions were utilized earlier, the most common was the rule-of-law, which was introduced by the colonialists. Islamic Sharia law was only applied in matrimonial and inheritance cases; while traditional law was used in nomadic circles - away from urban areas of the country. People then resorted to resolving their disagreements with violence - where the law-of-the-jungle became the norm. The prevalent instability of the country - especially the capital city Mogadishu - caused concern locally and internationally.

SAACID has been occupied in diverse sectors of community development, and has designed a new approach for addressing the prevalent instability in Mogadishu through the imposition of an NED targeted to develop district-based conflict resolution centres, that are based upon principals of democracy, federalism, governance, rule-of-law and conflict resolution and conflict transformation strategies. The programme would focus on the establishment of pilot conflict resolution centres in 4 of the 16 districts of the city - enabling the respective communities to resolve their differences through peaceful dialogue and the application of conflict management strategies.

According to the programme, civil leaders would be invited to participate in a workshop to explain the programme; and to provide space so that they could become genuine stakeholders in the programme.

**Workshop Title:** Mobilisation Workshop

**Workshop Duration:** 20-21 June 2006

**Workshop Venue:** SAACID conference Hall

**Workshop Beneficiaries:** The District Commissioners (DCs) and another other prominent leaders from 4 Mogadishu districts

**Workshop Participants:** 40 persons

**Funding Agency:** National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

**Workshop Overall Objectives:** To train targeted local leaders in democratic principals, federalism, governance, rule-of-law, conflict resolution and conflict transformation strategies, where the districts would be empowered to establish conflict management centres, in order to resolve all arising disagreements in their neighbourhoods.

## **Other Objectives**

- Update 40 persons selected from the 4 targeted districts in Mogadishu - namely Hodan, Waberi, Abdul-aziz, and Bondhere
- Seek the partnership of the participants in the establishment of the expected conflict management centres within the 4 targeted districts

- Identification and elaboration of the causes of the conflict as well as identifying and agreeing upon resolutions
- Identification and agreement upon a common conflict management strategy for the Somali context

### **Day 1 - 20 June 2006**

- The participants arrived on schedule at 9:00 hours on 17 July 2006, at SAACID's Conference Hall. SAACID's Country Director, Ms. Raha M. Janaqow, the Deputy Chairman of Mogadishu City Council, Mr. Sharif Hussein Robow, and the facilitator, Mr. Abdulkadir Mohamoud Walayo, were also present at the workshop. The participants then introduced themselves. The facilitator invited one of the participants to recite a few verses of the Holy Quran. The participants then set a code of conduct prior to the commencement of the workshop.

SAACID's Country Director opened the workshop by highlighting its objectives. She noted that nothing would be resolved unless all the districts came together and provided a common civil society front to the problem of law-and-order. She noted that this would be a pilot programme to provide proof-of-concept to the international community. She said that if the districts could make the conflict mediation centres work, then she was confident that further funds could be secured to expand the programme to all districts of the city; and to enhance the centres in each district. She said that it was up to Mogadishu civil society to convince the international community that civil society was serious and united in this endeavour. She said that this could best be done by merging international norms with traditional Somali sources of law.

The facilitator talked about the importance of the workshop, saying that it would positively respond to the people's adamant aspirations for positive and peaceful change. He said that the gun couldn't solve anything, and stressed the need to resort to an election-based democratic process instead.

The facilitator talked about the programmes goals and its duration. He mentioned that a media component would be part of the programme; and its final aim was to set up sustainable mediation centres - targeting the establishment of conflict resolution institutions at district level. Somali professionals would attend radio panel discussions on peace-building, conflict resolution, and the importance of the rule-of-law in Somali society - in concert with the present situation of Somalia, with the intention of transforming Somali society from the current chaotic state of affairs, to a viable and successful state. The participants were provided with handouts, elaborating the given lectures during the workshop at the termination of the programme.

Somali folklore and other poetry that embrace peace messages were included in the programme. He informed the participants that during the workshop, SAACID would produce leaflets carrying peace messages and conflict resolution/transformation manuals that would empower the people in every district on how to deal with conflict resolution and conflict management. Stickers of different sizes would also be produced, demonstrating peace mottos and other relevant insignia.

The facilitator gave the participants a concise explanation on the principles of conflict resolution. He informed the participants that - especially after WWII - diplomats and other scholars developed 50 years ago, the impression of conducting deep research into conflict resolution. The concept obtained momentum in the mid-sixties, eighties and nineties, particularly when the wind of social and political change stormed into the former Soviet Surrogate states - e.g. Romania's Ceausescu; and Ethiopia's Mengistu regimes.

Studies were retrieved from conflict-ridden areas in the world and other international libraries. These studies undertaken noted that the final resolution of a given conflict lies in the hands of the warring sides. Experts believe that destruction, misery and death emanating from violent conflicts could be surmounted if the warring sides accepted mediation by a third party that wasn't partial and was non-coercive. Experts on the subject concluded that conflict resolution and its relevant analysis couldn't be divorced from one another. It's a single job. In-depth, analysis of the conflict is a step taken to the right direction.

At the end of the cold war, many countries emerged from communism doctrine and socialist ideology then plunged into civil strife, and the wind of social and political change blew on this part of Africa in the early nineties. The demise of Siad Barre's military regime in the early nineties led into an inter and intra-clan war that claimed the lives of thousands of people, and also injured tens of thousands of others. While a considerable number sought refuge in other parts of the world. The vicious cycle of stubborn warlords persisted and turned the country into small fiefdoms under their respective control. Attempts to re-establish statehood faltered time and again. Moreover, the present feeble government that is based in Baidoa continues to fail to relocate in the capital city, Mogadishu, and take control of the country as a whole.

He then focused on Somali traditional conflict resolution approaches. Some participants contended that the present conflict is politico-tribal, and is alien in Somali customary conflict. Hence, only Islam would be the answer to its resolution.

## **Day 2 - 21st June 2006**

The participants continued to question the issue of conflict resolution. The respondents largely had the same conclusion - emphasising that conflict could be sparked off between 2 or more individuals, groups, family, neighbours or states.

Before engaging into group work, the participants listened carefully to a lecture concerning the question of "what is conflict".

"Conflict is a situation where 2 or more individuals or groups try to pursue goals or ambitions which they believe they cannot share".

Not all conflict is violent. Conflict is normal when there is change. Some people want change, but others disagree. If their disagreement or their conflict is not managed properly, it can become violent. In violent conflict, people fear for their safety and survival. When we say conflict, we are usually referring to violent conflict.

What Causes Conflict?

Worldwide, it is predictable that conflict will arise where:

- Resources are scarce and not shared fairly - as in food, housing, jobs or land
- There is little or no communication between the 2 groups in conflict
- The groups have incorrect ideas and beliefs about each other
- Unresolved grievances exist from the past
- Power is unevenly distributed

Consider the likely sources of conflict in your country. Consider what caused the conflict to become violent. If we do consider the Somali situation, wise people may consider engaging in an in-depth analysis the following as a point of entry:

- Evaluation the present state of Somali affairs
- The newly-established TFG and the process it passed for its formation
- Khartoum I meeting and its outcome between the TFG and the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC)
- The proposed Khartoum meeting to be held shortly
- The role of CSOs in the planned Khartoum II meeting
- If there was a breakthrough for the difference emerged after Khartoum meeting
- The interests of Somali people and nation
- What would be the plight of the defeated warlords by the militia loyal to the UIC
- International community and neighbouring countries interests
- Using different tactics and methodology the conflict could be transformed into mediatory and comprising stances
- How initiatives could affect the conflict positively and negatively
- Other factors that may deem to be considered

Splitting the workshop into 5 groups, the participants addressed “what is conflict”:

#### Group I

- Misunderstanding
- Resource
- Land
- Political interests
- Injustice
- Power usurpation
- Disparity of economic distribution
- Religious Sects
- Range and grazing areas
- Hegemony
- Outcasts
- Marginalization
- Clanism

## Group II

- Incompatible views
- Lack of discipline
- Politics driven by personal or group interests
- Mismanagement of public property - e.g. water wells, lands, etc
- Injustice
- Nepotism
- Greediness

## Group III

- Injustice
- Apartheid
- Rape
- Robbery
- Prejudice
- Dictatorial tendencies
- Differing views of public property ownership

## Group IV

- Disregarding the teachings of the Holy Koran and the Prophet Mohammed
- Divergent ideas
- Injustice
- Discrimination both in rural and urban areas
- The incompatibility of rural and urban life

## Group V

- Injustice
- Meanness
- Undue utterances
- Embargo
- Threat

Participants exchanged ideas on the best way to resolve the Somali conflict through traditional forms of conflict resolution; while accepting the new reality on the ground that cropped up during the civil war. Some participants recalled how the South Africans resolved nearly 500 years of apartheid legacy through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, led by Bishop Desmond Tutu in the nineties.

The participants suggested the launching of radio programmes, which deal with conflict resolution and conflict management to make the general public aware the importance of good governance, the rule-of-law, the strengths and weaknesses of a federal system of government.

The following points were identified as a basis for analysis of the Somali conflict:

- The origins of the politically-motivated conflict
- The political agenda of the various political entities - the UIC - the TFG
- What would be the outcome of Khartoum talks
- The role of civil society organisations in the political talks
- The lack of government institutions
- The second phase of the talks between the UIC and the TFG
- The interests of neighbouring countries
- The pacification of the capital

Besides engaging in mediation at the district-level, the future centres would also be empowered to organise recreational activities and other public events that would pave the way for societal intermingling and interaction so as to heal the wounds of civil war.

The workshop concluded with all participants agreeing on a common agenda and strategy to develop grassroots conflict resolution centres in each of their districts. They also agreed upon a format for information sharing that would help identify common strengths and weaknesses on the centres; and help strengthen them in a developmental process. It was agreed that SAACID would coordinate the development of the centres. Everyone felt confident that it could be done; and that the centres would be beneficial. There was still doubt by some that the resolution centres could be compatible with strong Islamic principles that they were supporting. The majority though, thought that the centres could work with Islamic law.