



## AGRF 2016 – SIDE EVENT REPORT

Day 1 - Monday, September 5

14:30- 17:30

Agriculture Transformation in Somalia - USAID/DFID/Somalia Agriculture  
Technical Group

### SESSION BRIEF

**Context:** Somalia is emerging from two decades of conflicts due to the collapse of the Central Government in 1991. Throughout the years of conflict and fragility, Somalia's private sector helped maintain economic activity. Despite a long period of instability several sectors have thrived such as agriculture (especially sesame), livestock exports, remittance services and telecommunications. Somalia's highly entrepreneurial private sector has also filled the void of government institutions. While these achievements are impressive, further growth is constrained by underinvestment, insecurity and inappropriate or absent regulation. The focus of donors/and UN agencies are on security, stabilization, governance and humanitarian assistance and in lesser extent on long term development opportunities in critical sectors such as agriculture.

**Session objectives:** This panel discussion explored current investments in agricultural transformation in Somalia. Multiple stakeholders will discuss their efforts to support new and ongoing increases in Somalia's regional linkages and integration. Resilience topics, with a focus on livestock, will be discussed. This transformation is being undertaken in tandem with state building, both federally and regionally, presenting a unique set of both opportunities and challenges.

**Key Issues/ Questions:** Can Somalia tap/or benefit from global and regional research/or knowledge pools e.g. new/improved seeds, tissue culture (bananas); or address diseases in bananas or new technologies in drip irrigation systems? How can Somalia build upon or strengthen private sector led certification for export markets; new investments in technology and skills; as well as reinforce the capacity and legitimacy of the government through tax revenues, and their active commitment to prosperity?

**Outcome Desired:** Reaffirmation by the Somalia Government of support to the agriculture sector as one of the core economic sectors that will contribute to rebuilding and the recovery of Somalia. Attraction of international development partners, donors, and international agricultural organizations and institutions for Somalia agricultural transformation. Exploration of opportunities for collaboration in areas of research and technology transfer with regional stakeholders and institutions such as CGIAR, AGRA, and international private companies. While Somalia may be unique; the aim was to use the side event to identify lessons learned from other countries that might have faced similar challenges and opportunities.

**Organizers:** Government of Somalia, USAID/GEEL, DFID/PIMS and SATG.



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<p>Ms. Sophie Walker, Regional Value Chain Expert, ACDI/VOCA</p>		<p>With 19 participants in total, the event was introduced by Ms. Sophie Walker, a regional value chain expert at ACDI/VOCA. Ms. Walker provided a general current overview of Somalia’s agricultural sector.</p> <p>This introduction included information about Somalia’s history, and Somalia’s pledge to recover after two decades of conflict. She noted that many institutions were destroyed as a result of previous wars in Somalia increasing the country’s vulnerability in the agricultural sector. Ms. Walker also emphasized that despite all the challenges, Somalia remained keen to transform its agricultural sector, and as such the purpose of the panel discussion was to afford Somalia’s representatives an opportunity to share their plans as to how they would like to develop the national agricultural sector.</p>
<p>Role: Moderator</p>		<p>The keynote presentation during this session was delivered by H.E. Abdullahi Sheikh Ali Ibrahim, Deputy Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Federal Government of Somalia.</p> <p>HE Ibrahim provided a more detailed overview of Somalia’s agricultural sector today.</p> <p>He emphasized that Somalia is in a good position to rebuild its agricultural sector, and the key points he made about Somalia’s agricultural sector included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somalia has a coastal area of 3400km, which happens to be the longest in Africa.</li> <li>• Over 8.5million hectares of land is available for agriculture.</li> <li>• Agriculture is the most important economic sector. It accounts for about 65% of the GDP and employs 65% of the workforce. Livestock alone contributes about 40% to GDP</li> </ul>
<p>H.E. Abdullahi Sheikh Ali Ibrahim; Deputy Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Federal Government of Somalia</p> <p><b>Keynote Speaker</b></p>		



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		<p>and more than 50% of export earnings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently Somalia has trade interest from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates - all of whom have established long term trade relationships with Somalia's thriving livestock sector. This will only strengthen as a result of improved disease surveillance and control mechanisms. Somalia's livestock industry has the potential to produce 1.8million tons a year.</li> <li>• There is a need, however, for the development of irrigated agriculture, and more canals need to be built.</li> <li>• There is also a strong need to increase Somalia's food supply - which must encompass the development of stronger value chains and a more market driven approach to agriculture, overall. The desire is to as quickly as possible eradicate Somalia's dependence on food aid.</li> <li>• In view of Somalia's commitment to the transformation of the agricultural sector, he went on to introduce Somalia's development plan, the first plan to be developed in 30 years – "The National Development Plan". The NDP also includes information on the government's development priorities.</li> <li>• Key aspects of the NDP related to agriculture included plans to:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture.</li> <li>○ Improve and rehabilitate productive agricultural infrastructure.</li> <li>○ Promote sustainable production intensification; and</li> <li>○ To develop and support effective agricultural output commodity/marketing systems across Somalia.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>"Moving national annual production from 150,000 to 750,000 tons is the transformation we are looking for, but this requires testing and adoption of new and improved technologies. Besides productivity increases, the transformation of Somalia's</p>
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		<p>agriculture depends on investment in infrastructure and markets,” he further noted.</p>
<p><b>Panelists</b></p>		
<p>Mr. Abdi Ahmed Mohamed, National Resilience Focal Point, Office of the Prime Minister, Federal Government of Somalia.</p>		<p>His Excellency’s presentation was followed by a presentation from Mr. Abdi Ahmed Mohamed, National Resilience Focal Point, Office of the Prime Minister, Federal Government of Somalia. Mr. Abdi, who introduced himself as ‘Bafour’, shared more information on the potential, key progressive steps that have been achieved, and can be achieved in the Somalia agriculture sector. Specifically, he noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bananas are the main cash crop and account for nearly 50% of export earnings;</li> <li>• There are plans to develop the fishing industry. Northern Somalia is the world's largest source of incense and myrrh;</li> <li>• Despite many problems including insecurity, political instability and bans by some major importing countries over the past 18 years, the number of animals and meat export has grown steadily thereby boosting the economy and livelihoods in rural areas. Somalia currently exports 3 million sheep and goats, 176,000 cattle and 11,000 camels per year, plus varying quantities of carcasses from between 340,409 (2005) through a peak of 718,903 (2006) and a low of 377,395 (2008).</li> <li>• An incubation centre is being set up to embrace science and technology.</li> </ul>
<p>Dr. Mohamed Shiridon, Agriculture Value Chains Advisor, USAID/Growth, Enterprise, Employment and Livelihoods Project (GEEL)</p>		<p>The final presentation was followed by a deeper discussion on the different value chains in Somalia. This presentation was delivered by Dr. Mohamed Shiridon, Agriculture Value Chains Advisor, USAID/Growth, Enterprise, Employment and Livelihoods Project (GEEL).</p> <p>He set the scene by saying to the delegates that there are 4 primary agricultural zones in Somalia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Northwest in parts of Awdal and W. Galbeed - rain fed maize and sorghum are grown, with some livestock</li> </ul>



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		<p>herding;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The coastal cowpea belt exists in Central and Southern Somalia;</li> <li>• In the Shabelle and Juba Riverine Valleys - rain fed and irrigated maize, with sesame cash crops are grown;</li> <li>• Lastly, in the sorghum belt in the Bay and Bakool Region - rain fed sorghum is grown, and livestock production takes place.</li> </ul> <p>Other additional points he made included the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Today there is very low value addition being done to agricultural produce;</li> <li>• There is a need to engage with more farmers – through the use of cooperatives;</li> <li>• 80% of the population are nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralist, who keep camels, goats , etc.;</li> <li>• Somalia's farming areas are concentrated in the southern part of the country; and</li> <li>• The principal crop exports include banana and sugar, sorghum, and corn which are crops produced for the domestic market.</li> </ul>
<p>Ms. Halima Saadia, Investment Advisor, USAID/GEEL</p>		<p>The next panelist was Ms. Halima Saadia, Investment Advisor, USAID/GEEL.</p> <p>Ms. Halima provided deeper insight on Somalia’s livestock potential and went on to reinforce that Somalia currently has the highest per capita livestock herds in the world. There is also 8.9 million hectares of cultivable land and vast marine resources. As such, Somalia is perfectly placed to contribute to the food security challenges the world faces today.</p> <p>Other points she made about investment in the agriculture sector, included :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is today a polarized economy in the country;</li> <li>• The possibility exists of achieving higher returns, but</li> </ul>



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		<p>increased technology must be used;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somalia is rich in entrepreneurial talent;</li> <li>• Somalia is currently a net importer, but vibrant opportunities to set up factories in Somalia exist;</li> <li>• Investment opportunities are available – particularly in infrastructure;</li> <li>• Somalia offers a range of tax incentives for investors</li> </ul>
<p>Dr Hussein Haji, Director, Somali Agriculture Technical Group (SATG)</p>		<p>“Increasing productivity will require the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders in the agricultural value chains to test and take up new and improved technologies,” said Dr. Hussein Haji, Director of Somalia Agricultural Technical Group in his opening remarks.</p> <p>SATG is a registered non-profit association of Somali professionals and friends of the country dedicated to assisting in the reconstruction of Somalia and its agricultural heritage.</p> <p>Established in 2011, SATG was established to provide sustainable home-grown solutions to alleviate the rampant food shortages caused by conflict and the lack of agriculture and food policy. Dr Haji touched upon the various challenges currently facing Somalia, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The heavy reliance on food aid; and</li> <li>• The lack of regulation in the agriculture sector (inclusive of poor enforcement of those regulations that exist), making it easier for unethical practise, for example NGO’s bringing untested seeds into Somalia.</li> </ul> <p>He stressed that it makes more sense for the stakeholders who have a vested commercial interest in Somalia’s agricultural sector to lead the transformation activities with avid support of the government. He said despite the government’s laudable commitment to transform Somalia’s agricultural sector, there were some unanswered questions that had to be addressed:</p>



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of model should be followed?</li> <li>• Where will the resources to pay for the transformation of Somalia’s agricultural sector come from?</li> <li>• What is the role of the private sector, and the various commercial stakeholders within Somalia’s agricultural sector? And lastly –</li> <li>• What is the role of the government towards this transformational agenda?</li> </ul>
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### Summary

The panel discussion ended on a very progressive note. The whole discussion provided the opportunity to not just showcase Somalia’s interest in developing its agricultural sector, but provided an invitation for those with the relevant expertise to join Somalia to help transform the sector.

Key additional requirements for boosting agricultural investment in Somalia were noted to include an effort to better exploit regional linkages and to create strategic partnerships for state building. The private sector was a key constituency that can contribute importantly by taking the lead in product certification for export markets and by investing in technology and skills. In the meantime, the Federal government has unveiled a 3-year national development plan that includes a comprehensive strategy and action plan for kick-starting the country’s development, with agriculture at the center of focus.