

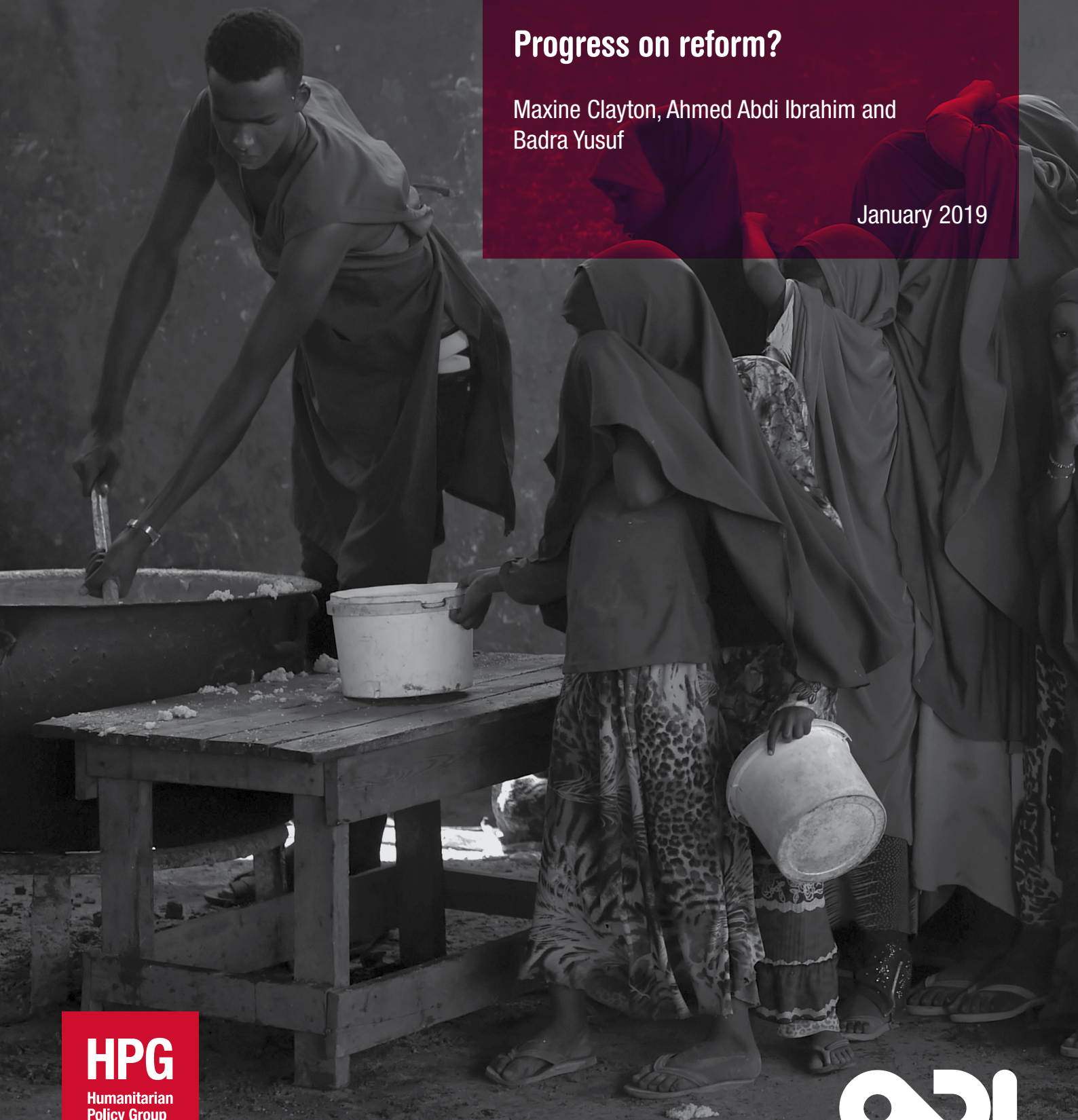
HPG Commissioned Report

# The 2017 pre-famine response in Somalia

## Progress on reform?

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# Executive summary

## Executive summary

This report was commissioned by the Somalia NGO Consortium and led by Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at ODI. The overarching objective was to review the collective humanitarian response to the 2017 Somali pre-famine crisis to inform and improve current and future operations and performance. The review was conducted through the lens of three commitments under the Grand Bargain agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS): the ‘participation revolution’, increased multi-year planning and funding and enhanced engagement between humanitarian and development actors. It highlights specific examples of good practice, analyses areas of common challenge and provides specific recommendations under each of the three Grand Bargain workstreams, both to employ immediately and to consider at a systemic level and over the longer term.

## Key findings

### Part I: The 2017 pre-famine crisis response: new and different from previous responses?

The humanitarian response in 2017 was seen as a critical test of the capability of all actors in Somalia and the international community to prevent a possible famine. The collective memory of the famine in Somalia six years earlier was clearly evident in the 2017 response. International partners, the Somali government and civil society acted on early warning signals near the end of 2016 suggesting that, if drought continued, a famine crisis was likely in 2017. Actors coordinated on collective messaging and advocacy, with a determination to respond as early and as quickly as they could. In the end the response was still seen as late, as adapted programming should have started at scale in 2016; even so, it was much better organised in 2017 than in 2011. However, gaps remain, including in ensuring that the gains made are consolidated and systemic.

### Part II: Progress per Grand Bargain workstream

The review suggests that the global reform commitments related to the Grand Bargain were

not a catalyst for the actions taken in 2017. They were, however, recognised as important inter-agency commitments, and were relevant to the situation in Somalia. Many initiatives in Somalia speak to the commitments, not least because decades of learning in the country informed them, which meant that they resonated with aid actors in Somalia and were seen as an opportunity to hold actors to account on their commitments.

### The ‘participation revolution’ in Somalia: putting people first?

It is important for the humanitarian system, globally and in Somalia, to recognise that a ‘participation revolution’ does not stop at signed commitments, statements of intent within a Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) or initiatives that can be picked up and dropped when funding declines or challenges emerge. Nor can the ‘participation revolution’ articulated in the Grand Bargain be reduced to a new checklist or tool for assessment and awareness-raising. Rather, it should be a game-changer in terms of the power relationships between the people agencies aim to assist and those who have resources and the ability to decide how they will be used. Genuine commitment and sustained collective action is a step forward in replacing the traditional top-down dynamic of the humanitarian ecosystem with a two-way process that results in better, more appropriate and targeted responses.

### Recommendations

1. **All actors in Somalia** should redouble their efforts to move from rhetorical commitments to sustained action within the participation revolution. Collective participation and feedback systems should inform collective response priorities or changes. This should no longer be seen as a ‘nice thing to do’ or given up on as ‘tried and it hasn’t worked’. These systems should mirror stated plans and proposal commitments. There is a need to increase, speed up and sustain the collective pace and communication of priorities, commitments and implementation for all stakeholders in Somalia, with clear roles and responsibilities.
2. **The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)** should define and sustain Grand Bargain priority commitments and indicators in Somalia, including

specific gender guidance, to track progress and impact and to gauge any improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.

3. **The government and state institutions** should prioritise involvement in establishing and monitoring the Grand Bargain commitments and indicators within the participation revolution and identify best practice in government accountability mechanisms.
4. **All actors** should find ways to increase the opportunities for local NGOs to participate in Grand Bargain discussions, and improve participation of and engagement with communities and the monitoring of commitments and indicators, building on dialogue and actions from the Grand Bargain discussion in July 2018.
5. **The HCT and Inter-cluster Coordination Group (ICCG)** should hold specific meetings in early 2019 to review respective leadership responsibilities, support and actions for effective engagement with and accountability to target populations, implemented in a coherent and standardised way. Key incentives for a collective approach and indicators over 2019 and beyond should be established, learning from previous challenges to the common services approach identified in 2016 and 2017.
6. **The HCT, ICCG and Drought Operations Coordination Centres (DOCCs)** should consider why previous collective initiatives (in 2016 and 2017) did not lead to the sustained results expected, and reinvigorate the common feedback project in 2019 with agencies willing to participate. **Donors** should allocate specific funding for participating agencies. The above coordination mechanisms should build and support Somali social media platforms to improve links between collective feedback and corrective action to adjust programming, and to support more agile, transparent and secure feedback.
7. **Donors** should collectively require aid organisations to demonstrate how they have engaged, and plan to continue to engage, with target populations, *and* whether/how they have designed and adapted their collective strategy and programmes accordingly.
8. **Donors** must ensure sufficient flexibility in existing and future funding agreements to enable aid organisations to adapt their programmes in response to feedback from target populations; budgets should consider the real-time needs of affected people. This should include ‘start-up’ and/or inception periods within all new programmes, to ensure time for community engagement in programme design and throughout the programme cycle.

9. **Aid organisations** must urgently institute appropriate incentives, including through performance management systems, standing agenda items and clear expectations within senior management meetings, to ensure that community participation and engagement policies are non-negotiable and implemented in a transparent, coherent and standardised way.
10. **All organisations** should focus on investing time in making programmatic changes based on feedback received, or clearly communicate the reasons why programmes have not been changed, and share that information with affected people.
11. **The Somalia NGO Consortium (SNC)** should share this report with its members and agree how the findings and recommendations will be fed back to stakeholders, especially communities involved in the review.

#### **Increasing collaboration in multi-year planning and funding: ensuring a collective, effective and appropriate focus?**

The effectiveness of the 2017 response was partly due to new or improved financing arrangements, including increased multi-year funding with the flexibility to respond to the evolving situation. However, it was not clear in this study that this financing was linked to a collective multi-year strategy or plan, collectively owned by the various stakeholders; that the same financing agreements were applied with all implementing partners, particularly national actors; or that levels of multi-year financing commitments are anywhere near what original commitments had envisioned, or what is needed in Somalia to ensure an appropriate collective focus. The Harmonizing Reporting Pilot needs to be communicated more widely and expanded to include more agencies. It should also be expanded to cover financial reporting, in addition to narrative reporting.

#### **Recommendations**

1. **The HCT** should define Grand Bargain priority commitments, approaches and indicators for multi-year planning and funding, and harmonised and simplified reporting requirements in Somalia, and track progress and impacts and any improvements in efficiency and effectiveness. Consider and include the guidance provided by the ‘Aide-Memoire on Gender Mainstreaming in the Grand Bargain’.
2. **The HCT** should drive the development of multi-year high-level strategic and response plans that set out a vision for moving beyond crisis response in protracted humanitarian contexts. This should be done collectively by



teams from both humanitarian and development stakeholders. Guidance should be developed collectively by humanitarian and development stakeholders, utilising existing best practices in support of the government.

3. **All organisations** should ensure that, in line with the commitments, the same terms governing multi-year funding agreements are applied with all their implementing partners.
4. **Aid agencies** should support the government of Somalia as part of the development of collective multi-year planning and priority-setting and coordinating investments to build human, technical and institutional capacity.
5. **Aid organisations** should ensure that coordination links are built between humanitarian and development donors at field level through regular coordination fora, ensuring collective planning, action and progress tracking.
6. **All actors within the Harmonizing Reporting Pilot** should seek to build momentum around the next steps for the harmonised narrative reporting pilot in 2019, and encourage more donors and agencies in Somalia to take part, with a focus on national agencies. They should also identify opportunities to harmonise financial reporting, again focusing on national partners.

#### **Enhancing engagement between humanitarian and development actors: breaking down the silos?**

A range of strategic plans and initiatives within Somalia and the region have sought to improve and deepen engagement between humanitarian and development actors, but the HCT, ICCG and other international coordination mechanisms in Somalia were seen as still doing business in a scattered way. The challenge lies in ensuring the centrality of communities and an appreciation of local and national systems within current initiatives; this could be more clearly articulated, streamlined, strategically coherent and systematic, to reduce duplication. Some initiatives and approaches can undermine others, and it is not always clear which strategic framework is a priority within Somalia; many respondents within this review felt that government planning should be the focus, but in reality this is often a box-ticking exercise on inclusion and government leadership.

#### **Recommendations**

1. **The HCT** should define Grand Bargain collective priority commitments, approaches and indicators in Somalia on engagement between humanitarian and development actors and track whether these have resulted in improved efficiency and effectiveness. These should consider and include

the guidance provided by the 'Aide-Memoire on Gender Mainstreaming in the Grand Bargain'.

2. **The HCT, with UNDP, UNHCR and regional/Somali government actors**, should work towards coherence between the various humanitarian and development strategies and initiatives in Somalia. There is a need to develop collective global advocacy on where current expectations within the 'international system' present obstacles to or facilitate this, for example in relation to funding mechanisms (UN appeals, the Recovery and Resilience Framework (RRF) and IGAD).
3. **All agencies** should ensure that assessments of immediate humanitarian and protection needs are complemented by deeper, area-based analysis. The development of collective, measurable outcomes should encompass emergency lifesaving and humanitarian needs, strengthened systems for local service delivery, increased economic opportunities and increased capacity of local institutions. Measuring such outcomes would also help generate evidence of what works in longer-term solutions-oriented programming from the outset (REDSS and IRC, 2017).
4. **All actors** should coordinate on improving information systems for better evidenced-based analysis to support decision-making. These systems should be owned within Somalia. This includes maximising relationships with national universities and national research institutions and with the Famine Action Mechanism (FAM) initiative. **The government** also needs to build in-country information management systems.
5. **All organisations** should ensure that organisational 'brands' do not become an obstacle to collective longer-term outcomes and actions in favour of greater strategic engagement, cooperation and collaboration among key stakeholders – national governments, national agencies including academia and research institutions, regional economic communities and international partners. This should include calling out situations where an agency 'brand' competes with collective outcomes.
6. **The humanitarian system** should find ways to encourage 'disruptors' and 'non-traditional actors' in strategic developments and initiatives, so that more innovative solutions can be found.
7. **All actors in Somalia** should hold a specific meeting in 2019 on streamlining and improving coordination mechanisms and facilitating increased dialogue between humanitarian and development actors, and establish, where relevant, government co-chairs of current coordination bodies where there is no existing representation (e.g. the HCT, ICCG), to facilitate clear

communication channels with government offices and to avoid sidelining government technical staff.

8. **All agencies** should seek to maximise the role of civil society actors. This will require changes, including in the way donors, the UN and international NGOs support national actors. Power imbalances need to be addressed and spaces created, particularly at local level, where the full range of national organisations can take part in decision-making. Participants felt less hopeful that Grand Bargain commitments could be achieved without changes to ways of working with national actors and new approaches that allow direct investment in local responders.

Despite a positive direction of travel and a willingness within the humanitarian system to learn and ‘do better’, commitments and rhetoric need to be turned into sustained and consistent action. Many of the key findings from the 2011 famine have and are being considered in Somalia, but enduring gaps remain. Were the successes seen in 2017 down to committed individuals and leaders pushing against the ‘traditional’ system? As one respondent noted, successes were achieved ‘in spite of the system’, rather than as part of the system’s stated commitment to reduce suffering, deliver better for people caught up in humanitarian crisis and to leave no one behind.

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# 1 Introduction

The overarching objective of this independent study was to review the collective humanitarian response to the pre-famine crisis in Somalia in 2017 to inform and improve current and future operations and performance. The review was conducted through the lens of three commitments under the Grand Bargain agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS): the ‘participation revolution’, increased multi-year planning and funding and enhanced engagement between humanitarian and development actors.<sup>1</sup> The review used two levels of analysis:

- An assessment of the achievements of and challenges in the response in light of lessons identified as part of earlier evaluations of similar responses in Somalia (specifically the response to the 2011 famine).
- An analysis of progress on global commitments, in particular the three Grand Bargain workstreams, to understand whether these commitments have helped or undermined the response in key priority areas.

The review highlights specific examples of good practice, analyses areas of common challenge and provides specific recommendations under each workstream, both to employ immediately and to consider at a systemic level and over the longer term.

## 1.1 Methodology and approach

The review responded to the following overarching questions:

- To what extent and in what ways did the response in 2017 take into consideration global reform commitments related to the Grand Bargain around the participation revolution, multi-year funding and programming and improving links between humanitarian and development assistance?
- Did such efforts help or hinder the achievement of the response objectives in key priority areas?
- What was new and different about the 2017 response, compared to similar responses in previous years? What are some of the enduring gaps? To what extent did the response consider and respond to lessons identified in the 2011 response?

- What immediate actions can be taken now to improve future responses to food insecurity in Somalia? What longer-term actions can be taken at a systemic level to improve responses to food insecurity in the future?

A mixed methods approach was used. The analysis drew on a review of existing documentation and literature, along with 28 key informant interviews with a range of stakeholders (see Annex 1 for a list of agencies interviewed) based in Somalia, in the region and globally, in addition to a Somalia Informal Humanitarian Donor Group (IHDG) introduction meeting. Focus group discussions were held in Mogadishu and Baidoa with 213 individuals from the Somalia NGO Consortium, senior officials and technical staff from government and humanitarian organisations, both national and international, and members of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and Drought Operations Coordination Centres (DOCCs). Focus group discussions were also held with Somalis in Mogadishu and Baidoa suffering from food insecurity and/or displaced by the crisis in 2017, and who had received some form of aid, with a particular focus on people who had received assistance in both 2011 and 2017. Table 1 shows the various stakeholder groups for the study, disaggregated by gender. The study did not break down stakeholder groups by age or disability.

Over 80 key informant names and agencies were provided by the Somalia NGO Consortium (SNC) and the study’s Steering Group, with another dozen or so added as the study progressed. Twenty-eight key informant interviews were conducted, as planned within the Terms of Reference (see Annex 1), although given the range of stakeholders suggested to the study team the number of relevant interviews could have easily been doubled.

While reviews of this kind are highly qualitative, the researchers nonetheless sought to measure progress in a similar way to the Grand Bargain annual reports (ODI, 2017), using an adapted ‘scorecard’ method. The scorecard approach was used in all the focus group discussions except those with aid recipients to collect perceptions of progress with regard to Grand Bargain implementation. The scorecard method used here differed from that of the 2018 Grand Bargain evaluation, also

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-hosted-iasc>

**Table 1: Stakeholder groups for the study**

Stakeholder group	Female participants	Male participants	Total
Community (IDPs and host communities)	62	55	117
L/NGOs	4	25	29
INGO	2	23	25
UN agencies including the ICCG	1	12	13
Government	1	23	24
Total	70	143	213

undertaken by HPG, in that it did not draw on the self-reports of Grand Bargain signatories, instead capturing the perceptions of individuals and organisations in Somalia on the effectiveness of these reform efforts. The results are summarised in the overall Grand Bargain introduction chapter.

Participants were interviewed on a not-for-attribution basis, and this report will not cite any statements as being connected to any individual unless specifically agreed by the respondent. When not qualified as having been drawn from another source, such as documents, the qualitative findings should be read as reflecting consistent or stated opinions of respondents.

## 1.2 Focus and limitations

This report focuses on the three selected Grand Bargain commitments, and as such is not a comprehensive study of the entire response effort in 2017. The workstreams were selected by the SNC in recognition that evaluations specific to other workstreams are either ongoing or were finalised during the period of this review (examples include localisation case studies and Cash Working Group evaluations). These areas were also prioritised in a Somalia Grand Bargain workshop in July 2018.

For the multi-year planning and funding workstream (workstream 7), the review also included one of the commitments under workstream 9 ('Harmonise and simplify reporting requirements'), specifically 'Simplify and harmonise reporting requirements by the end of 2018 by reducing its volume, jointly deciding on common terminology, identifying core requirements and developing a common report structure'. This was frequently mentioned during the study, as Somalia is one of the countries included in the current Harmonizing Reporting Pilot.

Assessments conducted by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) in April 2017 indicated a deteriorating food security situation, particularly

among rural pastoral populations in Sool, Sanaag, Bari and Nugaal regions, and among agropastoral populations in Bay region and IDPs in Baidoa and Mogadishu. Given the emphasis on internal displacement identified by the SNC, Baidoa and Mogadishu were selected for the focus group discussions.

The review did not include locations in Somaliland or Puntland, though the study team recommends these areas for further research as they were often cited in interviews as relevant for geographical comparison and to provide additional evidence and learning on the 2016–17 response.

Staff from international and national NGOs selected community participants for the focus group discussions from within their existing programmes, which may create biases based on current or future expectations of assistance. The study does not assess the prevalence of the opinions expressed as the sample is not representative (groups in the sample are not proportional to the size of the population).

In comparing the 2017 pre-famine response to previous responses, the review did not attempt to analyse the full range of evaluations of the responses in 2008, 2011 and 2017, due to the sheer scale the exercise would involve and in light of the focus of the review. In this regard, a 'meta evaluation' of these responses would be a valuable addition to the evidence, and could build on the analysis in this study, and reports and workshop recommendations from the SNC and the Cash Working Group. This would consolidate findings, amplify lessons and good practice and facilitate the prioritisation of the range of current recommendations for Somalia, to avoid evaluation and recommendation fatigue.

While not comprehensive, the report does build on a number of evaluations, initiatives and recommendations already under way in Somalia on both the overall response and the reform agenda set out under the Grand Bargain, where they overlap with the subject of this review.

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# 2 Part 1: the 2017 pre-famine crisis response: new and different from previous responses?

The 2011 famine in Somalia caused massive displacement and loss of life. By July 2011, 3.2 million people were in need of life-saving assistance, the great majority – an estimated 2.8 million people – in the south of the country. Some 260,000 people died. The area affected by the 2017 drought included Somaliland and Puntland, as well as the Southern and Central regions affected in 2011. More than twice as many people as in 2011 lost livelihoods or access to basic services, yet participants in this study were unequivocal in their assessment that the pre-famine response in 2017 was a vast improvement over that of 2011 and previous crises. Despite severe strains on the humanitarian system globally, and despite enduring gaps within Somalia itself, the international humanitarian community in Somalia

## Box 1: Definitions: famine is not just a lack of food

In technical terms, a famine is a situation where one in five households experience 'an extreme lack of food and other basic needs where starvation, death, and destitution are evident.' More than 30 percent of people are 'acutely malnourished' and two out of every 10,000 people die from starvation. This set of conditions is the most severe case in a range of classifications monitored by something called the 'Integrated Food Security Phase Classification' (IPC) that tracks the availability of food for people and helps governments and aid organizations anticipate a crisis before people experience famine, what the IPC calls Phase 5.

Source: Hufstader, 2018.

certainly learnt the lessons of the 2011 famine, and implemented an improved response in 2017.

Globally, famine is increasingly seen to be connected to the governance and policy environment, conflict and denial of access to markets, services and aid as a tactic, usually by all sides in the conflict. When this denial of access is extreme then any kind of trigger, including drought, an upsurge in acute conflict or food price spikes, may lead to massive excess mortality and possibly famine (Maxwell and Majid, 2016).

It has been frequently noted that the IPC measurement is limiting, as by the time a country/situation is declared Phase 5, or even Phase 4, many people will have already died, many more will be suffering, and in many cases it is too late for any preventative early action or effective response to address the underlying causes of vulnerability.

## 2.1 Learning our lesson?

During this review, three reports were frequently cited by respondents as providing lessons from the 2011 response that needed to be considered when responding in 2017. These were the *IASC Real-Time Evaluation (RTE) of the humanitarian response to the Horn of Africa drought crisis in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya* (Slim, 2012); *A dangerous delay* (Oxfam and SC, 2012); and *The UK emergency response in the Horn of Africa* (ICAI, 2012). Their findings are aggregated, summarised and adapted below. To what extent were the lessons from these evaluations understood and implemented in the subsequent response in 2017? What still needs to be done, now and for future responses?

### 2.1.1 Early warning, preparedness and triggers for action

Learning from the 2011 response, in 2014 the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Somalia agreed a framework to enforce an early action mechanism as part of efforts to strengthen the accountability of the HCT and humanitarian actors and facilitate decision-making for early action in emergency situations. However, although the humanitarian community agreed on a set of indicators to trigger response (Somalia HRP, 2016), these were not fully communicated to stakeholders, updated, used or translated into a coherent accountability framework for early action in 2017. Aid organisations working in Somalia expressed frustration that their locally generated assessments and early warning analysis were not able to trigger or be considered part of an early response.

In both the 2011 and 2017 responses, FSNAU and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) were relied on for early warning information, but such services are not fully set up to capture any sudden changes in context, vulnerabilities or needs, and do not adequately capture differences in seasonal risks. An FSNAU dashboard was established in 2011 to make FSNAU data more responsive by combining it with ‘real-time’ situation-based needs assessments, local area planning and localised vulnerability assessments, but this was not comprehensive, and decision-makers lacked specific information on affected communities, especially in rural areas and areas where access was limited. Very few aid organisations trusted the early warning information they were getting and failed to act decisively, before the famine alerts were issued. International partners, the Somali government and civil society began to act towards the end of 2016, but in the end the response was still seen as late as adapted programming should have started, at scale, earlier in the year. This was attributed to the timing of the release of additional financing in 2016, where most financing allocations are annual rather than multi-annual, and the lack of systematic and collective preparedness and early action plans.

It was repeatedly mentioned in this review that there was a need for improved support to the government, and particularly the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, to help ensure that it provide early warning and early action in the future.

### 2.1.2 Inter-agency coordination and advocacy

Most respondents in the study noted that the success of the 2017 response, relative to 2011, was in part

due to clear collective advocacy. This helped to focus thinking around ensuring effective humanitarian response in Somalia as the end goal, rather than being caught up in considerations of brand and competition. Local NGOs (LNGOs) had also developed better programming capacity and presence since 2011, and the larger number of LNGOs across different regions contributed to the scaling up of the response in 2017.

Progress in advocacy on the commitments of the Grand Bargain localisation workstream in Somalia, by the NEAR Network, the SNC and national actors, among others, started to gain traction in early 2017, with greater engagement in national and global advocacy on increasing representation and more direct funding to local and national NGOs. However, where global advocacy efforts were seen as mobilising political action, independent advocacy by local and national organisations appeared possible only when supported financially by international agencies or collectives.

In-country agency leadership, quick decision-making and strategic coordination and swift joint efforts by local and international partners have frequently been credited with averting another famine.

Many respondents noted the importance of inter-agency and closed door meetings early in 2017, with regional research institutions and ‘committed and passionate’ individuals involved in the response in 2011, in galvanising collective commitment, advocacy and early action. However, as the situation evolved it became clear that these efforts lacked an overarching strategy based on previous learning and pre-prepared collective preparedness and contingency plans, cited and used within the different stages of the response, and linked to pre-positioned relief supplies, partnerships and personnel to scale up a response among international and national partners. The overall collective level of system readiness for a large-scale drought seemed low in the initial stages, especially given how common such crises are in Somalia.

Later in 2017, the newly created Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management of the Federal Government of Somalia, supported by OCHA, launched the National Humanitarian Coordination Centre to work with the DOCCs established by OCHA to expedite the scaling up of the response and improve coordination. Operational from 2017, the DOCCs – together with intensified HCT coordination and the National Humanitarian Coordination Centre – strengthened inter-cluster coordination and helped bring together, at least to a degree, a fractured aid operation.

## Box 2: Case study – Somalia NGO Consortium advocacy

In the lead-up to the 2017 response, the Somalia NGO Consortium carried out a number of coordination and advocacy initiatives at global, regional and national levels stressing the need to act quickly to avoid another famine. The process started with a call to action endorsed by 38 NGOs, issued in November 2016. This came with a clear message: it was the responsibility of donors, implementers, national and local authorities, the Somali business community and any other actor with the capacity to provide help to step in immediately and provide assistance to affected populations, and do their utmost to see that the drought did not lead to famine. In January 2017, after a joint alert issued by FEWSNET and FSNAU in which the risk of famine (IPC Phase 5) was identified as a worst-case scenario, the SNC stepped up its advocacy efforts. Links were strengthened with NGO networks in Europe and the United States. Conference calls with NGO colleagues in key advocacy capitals were held weekly.

Between January and June 2017, the SNC and its members participated in high-level events in Mogadishu, Nairobi, Berlin, Geneva, London,

Washington, Entebbe and Addis Ababa. Between February and March, joint letters endorsed by more than 30 NGOs were sent to 12 bilateral and multilateral donors in Spain, France, Germany, Australia, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Norway, Belgium and the United States. A letter was sent by the SNC to the UN Secretary-General on 27 February 2018 asking the UN to openly and regularly communicate the grave risk of famine to member states, and urging them to provide timely financial support to relief efforts. A visit to Somalia on 7 March by Antonio Guterres, accompanied by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, was Guterres' first field visit since assuming office in January 2017.

By March 2017, half of the funds requested had been committed or pledged. In June 2017, the HRP's funding requirements were revised up to \$1.5 billion. By August, donors had provided \$900 million, and operational agencies were reaching 3 million people a month with humanitarian assistance. The rapid scale-up would have not been possible without early advocacy efforts.

*Source: Research by Somalia NGO Consortium*

Documents in this review widely credited the DOCCs as playing a critical role in planning the response at the local level, and tackling issues such as information-sharing, avoiding duplication and improving coverage and access. However, not all NGOs were involved, and UN security requirements made it difficult for government and local actors to access the Mogadishu DOCC.

### 2.1.3 Facilitate and support a diversity of actors in the response

In 2012, a new federal government was established in Mogadishu within the framework of the Provisional Constitution. Following this political transition, the international community agreed the Somali Compact with the FGS, based on the principles of the New Deal. The Compact, agreed at the Brussels Conference in September 2013, provided an organising framework (2014–16) for assistance to Somalia in line with national priorities, and increasingly delivered by Somali institutions (World Bank, 2017).

The government of Somalia developed a three-year National Development Plan (NDP), informed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for 2017–19. This is the first NDP crafted by the central

government of Somalia since 1986. The NDP has four key inter-related objectives: articulating government development priorities; providing a structure for resource allocation and management; guiding development partner support within the government's defined priorities; and serving as an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy. The NDP came into operation in February 2017, coinciding with elections that ushered in a new president in a relatively peaceful transition.

Despite the political progress made since 2012 and an increasing focus on durable solutions for some of the longstanding humanitarian issues facing Somalia, armed conflict and clan violence continue, and political developments are yet to translate into significantly better basic services or livelihoods for most people. As a result, Somalia remains mired in a complex and protracted humanitarian crisis (UN-OCHA, 2017).

In addition, while local and national NGOs played a strong role in aid delivery in hard-to-access and remote areas and in mobilising local communities during the 2017 response, there were concerns about the limited investment in existing national capacities and in developing partnerships with local NGOs.

Most INGOs see the advantage of involving local implementing partners in projects, but there is still an unfortunate tendency to subcontract national NGOs for the duration of a project, rather than setting up longer-term partnerships, which often amounts, as one respondent noted, to ‘outsourcing workloads, risks and problems’ to local and national NGOs. Local NGOs are often subcontracted to undertake specific activities in Al-Shabaab and other conflict areas. This often means that they take substantial risks themselves. It was also noted that, for INGOs and UN agencies, if something goes wrong (e.g. misconduct/malpractice) within a project, individuals take responsibility, rather than the issue being seen as an agency-wide problem. Local or national NGOs are not extended the same latitude to use their internal policies to deal with malpractice/misconduct by their staff, and can be blacklisted and their resources cut.

Local actors have very little scope for direct sustainable institutional development, and instead find themselves fighting for survival from contract to contract. The inability of local NGOs to attract unrestricted or core funds denies them the ability to undertake independent advocacy, recruit and retain the best staff or ensure stand-by or continuity of capacity to respond to the next crisis, in time and appropriately. In a country like Somalia, with recurrent disasters, it should not be difficult to justify maintaining permanent capacities and investing in local NGOs, but the short-term contractual process erodes trust between INGOs and their local counterparts and hinders the development of long-term relationships. In 2017, Somali NGOs, with support from the NEAR Network and the SNC, produced a policy paper responding to these issues, based on inter-agency and donor meetings, and dialogue is ongoing on opportunities for more sustained and strategic capacity engagement; this should be encouraged.

Compared to 2011, the pre-famine response in 2017 was more effective at enhancing national and local government leadership and involving a wider array of response actors at a critical phase. Most notably, the FGS took on a stronger leadership role. It launched a funding appeal and established a National Drought Response Committee to collect funding from the diaspora and the private sector, alongside bilateral support from Islamic countries and concerned philanthropists. By 2017, the FGS had also extended its reach to several areas previously inaccessible because they were under the control of Al-Shabaab. Respondents cited examples where the FGS, with

### Box 3: ‘A fierce famine stalks Africa’

‘Young Somali activists across the globe have created social media groups such as *Caawi Walaal*, *Abaaraha* and *Somali Faces*, who identify with the victims of the drought in a visceral, familial way. Although they have been able to raise modest amounts of money, their network of local volunteers can reach remote places where the larger charities can’t. The young professionals behind *Abaaraha* used a Kenyan open source platform, *Ushahidi*, to gather real-time data from those affected by the drought and to coordinate Somali relief efforts.’

*Extract from a New York Times opinion piece by Nadifa Mohamed, 12 June 2017 ([www.nytimes.com/2017/06/12/opinion/a-fierce-famine-stalks-africa.html?mwrsm=Email](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/12/opinion/a-fierce-famine-stalks-africa.html?mwrsm=Email))*

support from the African Union (AU) mission AMISOM and other partners, provided escorts in hard-to-reach areas such as Hudur and Wajiid.

Diaspora groups and private sector organisations were also more connected to the response, and social media platforms highlighted the plight of disaster-affected communities through daily live streams. These platforms also challenged aid agencies’ targeting decisions and information on the response in real time. The *Abaarah.org* platform, for example, provided digital information that connected reports from the field with fund managers. This generated interest and funding from the private sector, local communities, the diaspora and local government through initiatives such as ‘*Caawi-Walaal*’ and ‘*Famine resisters*’, launched to collect and manage funds (see Box 3). The private sector Hormuud Foundation<sup>2</sup> spent \$1.2 million on food, medicines and water in 2017, and \$1.6 million in 2018.

Despite these positive examples, it was consistently noted in the study that collective action post-2017 is declining. Without the threat of famine to galvanise attention and focus, longer-term issues, including addressing the structural causes of vulnerability, risk reduction and resilience and urban needs, are losing traction. Key drivers of vulnerability still exist, and access remains a key hindrance to the delivery of aid. An honest discussion is needed on how aid agencies can operate in hard-to-reach areas. Reactivating the access working group and engaging in strategic coordination across a variety of aid and other actors

2 <https://www.hormuud.com/corporate/company/hormuud-foundation.aspx>



on longer-term issues confronting Somalia, including displacement, urbanisation, conflict dynamics, risk reduction and collective accountability, is essential.

#### **2.1.4 Manage the risks, not the crisis**

The response in Somalia largely focused on the crisis, without due attention to the cyclical, chronic and layered risks that underpin vulnerability. While in 2017 famine was averted largely because of temporary improvements in food security and health as a result of the humanitarian response, the basic risk of famine remains. In 2017, the comprehensive Drought Impact Needs Assessment (DINA), conducted for the FGS with the support of the World Bank, the European Union (EU) and the UN, pointed to the need for a closer focus on reducing the risk of famine, particularly in inaccessible areas, areas affected by high levels of internal displacement or where communities or groups have been excluded from government attention or international aid.

All protracted humanitarian responses should have, at the very least, a multi-year high-level strategic plan that sets out a vision for moving beyond the crisis, tailored to and built on area-based plans. Managing risks can mean different things to different agencies, and defining what multi-year planning can and cannot achieve in managing risks, and designing and successfully implementing even a relatively limited version, can be challenging. In Somalia, a country that has experienced over 20 years of turmoil and

multifaceted crises – conflict, poor and non-existent government in many areas, disease, floods, drought, displacement, food insecurity and skyrocketing food prices – will require larger investments in basic services such as education, health, infrastructure, agriculture and urban water and sewerage systems. Such investments need to be situated within a coherent, multi-stakeholder strategy, with flexible funding and planning that can support pre-emptive or early response and respond to uncertainty, including crisis modifiers and risk financing mechanisms to quickly scale up response when crisis hits.

Prioritising resilience programming was a major lesson from the 2011 response. Donors stepped up their engagement (and geographical presence) in Somalia in 2012–13 through several major resilience programmes, including the UN’s Joint Resilience Programme, the Somalia Resilience Programme (SomReP), Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS) and Strengthening Nutrition Security in South Central Somalia (SNS). Several of these programmes had complementary emergency response funds, including the DFID Internal Risk Facility (IRF) emergency pool, the Somalia Humanitarian Fund and the CERF, which were used in the response to the 2017 crisis. Based on partners’ feedback and lessons from 2017, the Somalia Humanitarian Fund has identified areas for improvement in communication, participation, training and reporting, particularly with national actors.



# 3 Part II: progress in Somalia on Grand Bargain commitments: towards an improved and more effective response?

The Grand Bargain outlines 51 commitments organised within ten thematic work streams. This study focuses on three: workstream 6 (the participation revolution), workstream 7 (increase collaborative multi-year planning and funding) and workstream 10 (enhance engagement between

humanitarian and development actors – the ‘nexus’). An additional commitment was included from workstream 9 on simplifying and harmonising reporting requirements by the end of 2018. Successes and challenges in Somalia within these specific commitments are presented below.

## Scorecard: overall perceptions of progress in Somalia on workstreams of focus for this review

The ‘scorecard’ approach was used within Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), except with communities, to collect perceptions of progress with regard to Grand Bargain implementation. The scorecard method used here differed from that of the 2018 Grand Bargain evaluation, also undertaken by HPG, in that it documented the perceptions of Grand Bargain progress by individuals within the FGDs, rather than self-reports against the commitments of Grand Bargain signatories.

The figure below shows an average score of perceptions by stakeholders in the FGD self-assessments, within each of the commitments under the workstreams.

Workstreams	Local/national non-governmental organisations (L/NNGOs)	International non-governmental organisations (INGOs)	Informal Humanitarian Donor Group (IHDG)	Other UN agencies	Inter-cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) Mogadishu	Government
Participation revolution	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Funds/financing	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆
Humanitarian–development nexus	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆

Key:



No significant progress



Little progress



Some progress



Good progress



Excellent progress

There was a consistent view expressed during the study that the Grand Bargain commitments, as headquarters-driven and fledgling initiatives, were neither considered explicitly within the response in 2017, nor were they a clear catalyst for action. While the commitments were thought to be heading in the right direction, awareness of them seems to have been confined to the higher global level within each of the agencies interviewed. However, it was also recognised that many of these global-level commitments had been informed by decades of learning from Somalia, and therefore resonated with aid actors in the country.

None of the stakeholder groups in the focus group discussions with members of government, international and local organisations felt that there had been either ‘good’ or ‘significant’ progress on the three Grand Bargain commitments examined as part of this study, according to the scorecard scale. Many pointed to a range of individual agency initiatives, but felt that a collective focus was still lacking. Overall, INGOs were most positive, followed by the Informal Humanitarian Donor Group and lastly government focus group participants. The multi-year planning and funding workstream (workstream 7) was perceived as the best of the three, followed by the ‘participation revolution’ and the humanitarian–development nexus. Government representatives in the focus group discussions gave ‘no significant progress’ for all three workstreams.

The Grand Bargain focus areas and perceptions scorecard results are consistent with the outcomes of the NGO Grand Bargain Somalia Workshop in July 2018 on the workstreams and commitments (highlights relevant to this study are in Box 4).

There is growing momentum for shifting the focus of what are largely global commitments to action at country level, and a greater focus on the impacts on the people agencies aim to assist. This study points to a need to strike a balance between contextualising the Grand Bargain agreement through, for example, the development of country-based priorities and indicators, and global-level initiatives to garner political support and develop solutions where impediments or obstacles to the achievement of objectives are structural and system-wide. One issue is how to prioritise the 51 commitments, with clear indicators to track progress. HPG (ODI, 2018) has proposed establishing a more focused subset of ‘core commitments’ that can be reasonably achieved, and which could potentially bring the greatest efficiency and effectiveness gains.

### 3.1 The participation revolution in Somalia: putting people first?

In Somalia, as globally, there has been growing recognition of the centrality of ensuring that the people agencies aim to assist are at the forefront of the humanitarian endeavour. A consistent message heard throughout this study was that the outcome or end-point of any response should be to ensure that people at risk of or affected by crisis are the focus of all response efforts.

The participation revolution workstream contains seven commitments. Examples of successes and challenges in Somalia within each of these commitments are presented below.

#### **Improve leadership and governance mechanisms at the level of the HCT and cluster/sector mechanisms to ensure engagement with and accountability to people and communities affected by crises**

The HCT in Somalia has acknowledged the importance of ensuring that communities are central to humanitarian action. The Somalia Humanitarian Strategy 2016–2018 states that:<sup>3</sup> ‘Consistent meaningful engagement with communities can improve programme quality and impact, and lead to a more effective response *and that* mainstreaming accountability to affected people (AAP) and communicating with communities (CWC) throughout the humanitarian programme cycle are priorities in 2016 and going forward’. It was frequently mentioned in this review that, while these commitments were clear on paper in strategic plans and HRPs, the question remains how they can be implemented and turned into practical and sustained action.

The IASC provides regular guidance on accountability and protection from sexual violence and abuse to HCTs and humanitarian leadership by enforcing, institutionalising and integrating AAP approaches in the programme cycle and strategic planning processes, and by establishing management systems to solicit, hear and act on the views and priorities of affected people. Drawing on this guidance, steps set out in the 2016 Somalia HRP included annual action planning sessions on operationalising the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and IASC AAP Framework, and the development of a 4Ws tool on accountability activities to minimise duplication, identify where agencies can coordinate at field level, and identify potential for harmonising feedback and complaints mechanisms

3 <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/somalia/document/2016-2018-somalia-humanitarian-strategy>

## Box 4: Highlights from the Grand Bargain Workshop in Mogadishu, July 2018

Highlights from the workshop in July 2018 on the Grand Bargain in Mogadishu with 31 participants from NGOs representing all regions of Somalia, (two thirds of the participants were from local NGOs while the other third were representatives of INGOs and networks). Participants explored the relevance of the Grand Bargain in relation to their daily work, and identified priority workstreams and commitments with which to engage further.

Priority areas identified by NGOs operating in Somalia included localisation, the participation revolution and donor conditionality and partnership modalities (multi-year planning and funding, reduced management costs). The importance

of the humanitarian–development nexus was mentioned several times, in order to address root causes of vulnerabilities and work towards longer-term solutions.

The harmonised and simplified reporting workstream was not highlighted as a priority as, thanks to a pilot initiative led by ICVA and Germany, NGOs felt that this was already happening. However, broader harmonisation and simplification of donor requirements as a general recommendation was suggested on several occasions throughout the day.

*Source: ICVA, VOICE and SNC, 2018.*

between agencies. Additionally, the HRP stated that ICCG meetings would have a standing agenda item on accountability (community engagement) specifically reviewing results from complaints and feedback mechanisms, identifying trends, collectively defining solutions and tracking progress. ‘The ICCG will report to the HC/HCT on trends identified and outcomes from community consultations’ (HRP, 2017).<sup>4</sup>

Specific actions stated within the HRPs do not appear to have been fully implemented, sustained or built on within the 2017 HRP, or the revision in May 2017. Instead, OCHA focused on working with the HCT and the ICCG to establish a collective approach and ensure that community voices inform HCT strategic decision-making, and help adjust operational plans appropriately. This was a new initiative, with limited links to or review of the actions set out in 2016.

**Develop common standards and a coordinated approach for community engagement and participation, with the emphasis on inclusion of the most vulnerable, supported by a common platform for sharing and analysing data to strengthen decision-making, transparency and accountability and limit duplication.**

Respondents noted attempts by the HCT in Somalia to introduce a collective accountability initiative through the DOCCs (see Box 5), and committed specific OCHA staff to support the establishment of an inter-agency common feedback mechanism. Respondents also noted attempts to improve communities’ participation in programme design and decision-making, and gave the specific example of the Regional Durable Solutions

Secretariat (ReDSS), which has developed and shared key commitments to support social accountability in solutions programming and area planning approaches. However, many of these initiatives only started to gain momentum in early 2018.

The HCT-led initiative on a common feedback mechanism has been de-prioritised due to lack of support for such a collective complaints mechanism and information-sharing between agencies, and the lack of minimum standards on participation and community engagement. As noted in the DFID RTE: ‘Efforts to develop stronger collective feedback mechanisms have been hampered by a lack of resources and capacities (in contrast to other emergencies where more has been invested), a business-as-usual mentality and an organisational reluctance to share data’ (DFID RTE, 2018).

In the absence of a common framework, there are a plethora of complaints and feedback mechanisms, third-party monitoring and call centres across donors and individual agencies in Somalia. Different agencies use different formats and platforms for gathering feedback; some use toll-free numbers and others field staff to collect feedback. There is no common system for recording feedback from communities, or for using this information to inform future programmes or overall collective programming. There is even less discussion on the burden the plethora of feedback initiatives is imposing on communities. Some international NGOs invested in sophisticated systems for capturing information and following up on feedback, while others (mostly national NGOs) are unable to secure the necessary funding to establish such systems.

4 [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2016%20Somalia\\_HRP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2016%20Somalia_HRP_FINAL.pdf)

## **Strengthen local dialogue and harness technologies to support more agile, transparent and appropriately secure feedback**

At the level of individual agencies, there have been deliberate efforts to set up agency- or project-based complaints and feedback mechanisms, including hotline numbers for communities to call and field-level monitoring. Community interviews and focus groups in Mogadishu and Baidoa showed that people knew who to contact if they had a complaint. Interviews with NGO staff indicated that, rather than written complaints or hotlines, people preferred to bring their complaints in person or raise them with village or camp committees or leaders, who passed them on. Most complaints related to non-inclusion in aid targeting, or petitions requesting further assistance. While in the focus group discussions people mentioned being contacted by monitors by phone, having feedback mechanisms in place and collecting information on communities does not guarantee that agencies will act on community views given the power they have to decide which information they respond to or ignore. There are limited expectations on agencies to transparently disclose the feedback they receive and the actions that they take in response: this is still wholly voluntary.

Somalis both within the country and in the diaspora used social media platforms much more extensively in 2017 than in 2011 or 2008 to hold agencies to account for their actions and responses. Many respondents to this study discussed how agencies would investigate and/or initiate assessments on concerns raised on agency or individual Twitter accounts or on Facebook. This increased participation and demands for accountability by communities in Somalia is a clear growing trend, with over 6.65 million people (more than half the population) having mobile subscriptions (see Figure 1), more than double the figure in 2011. The use of technology and social media will continue to grow, as will community expectations around accountable humanitarian action.

## **Build systematic links between feedback and corrective action to adjust programming**

The study found limited systematic engagement of local communities and actors in informing programme priorities, design, areas of intervention and programme changes. However, there was evidence that some response funding and unarmarked emergency funds were released based

## **Box 5: The Common Feedback Project**

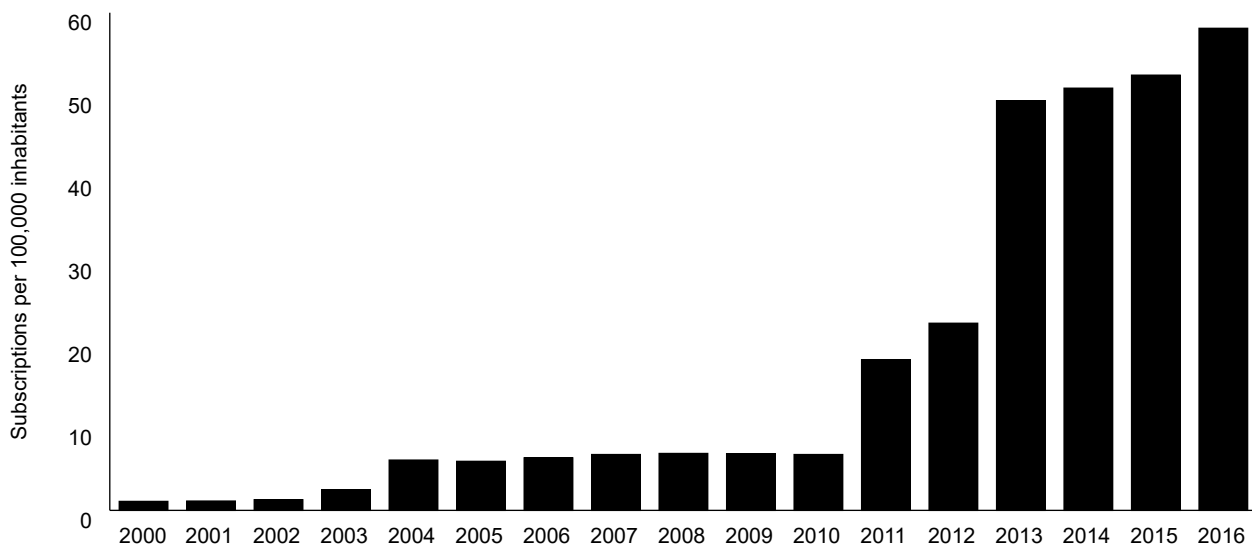
The Common Feedback Project (CFP), integrated into the DOCCs, collected, collated and analysed feedback from multiple platforms to identify key themes and issues raised by communities, particularly related to the drought. The first monthly issue of the Common Feedback Project Bulletin brings together information from more than 1,200 people collected through help desks at distribution points, community meetings, focus group discussions, suggestion boxes, post distribution monitoring surveys, SMSs, hotlines and radio broadcasts, mainly in Baidoa, Dollow, Galgaduud, Mogadishu and Lower Shabelle. Entities who have contributed feedback include mostly local NGOs such as NAPAD, HARD, WACRADO and IYRDA, as well as the Ministry of Health of South West State, World Vision, Adeso, NRC, DRC, UNICEF and RadioErgo.

*Source: OCHA, 2017*

on local-level needs assessments, albeit only once pre-famine alerts had been initiated. The prevailing perception was that donors and their implementing partners had already identified priorities with little or no flexibility to incorporate feedback from communities and local NGO staff in the field during implementation. During discussions with INGO staff, participants indicated that their HQ offices would often send them proposals based on the donor's area of interest, with field staff tasked with implementing assessments or activities with little room for adjustment. None of the participants responded when asked whether they usually consulted communities on their preferences and designed proposals in line with community priorities. All agreed that programmes were often driven by donor or NGO priorities. This was confirmed by surveys by Ground Truth Solutions in 2017, which found that a quarter of respondent field staff did not believe that affected people were able to influence programme design, and that the views of affected people were not considered because of a lack of engagement and consultation by aid agencies.

By and large, feedback and complaints mechanisms, as well as NGOs' interactions with communities, were limited to 'project beneficiaries', and did not include non-targeted people in affected communities. While information-sharing, complaints mechanisms and consultation with community

**Figure 1: Mobile subscriptions in Somalia, 2000–2016**



Source: Statista (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/510594/mobile-cellular-subscriptions-per-100-inhabitants-in-somalia/>)

groups were all written into proposals, consultation with wider affected communities and involving them in decisions that directly affected them did not receive adequate attention. Most agencies ascribed their lack of interaction with communities not targeted in their programming to a desire to avoid raising expectations.

NGOs work with various committees (village relief committees, women's groups) for selection and targeting of the response. Committee members also act as a bridge between NGOs and communities, providing information and facilitating complaints. However, even these committees were rarely aware of how decisions were made regarding the types of intervention implemented, and are not engaged in programme design. Their involvement appears extractive, with limited evidence of circling back or 'closing the loop' with regard to the information collected.

Many agencies use the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) or FSNAU reports to inform their programming and choice of target areas. Respondents indicated a need to invest in a more systematic real-time process, supported by the government through strong partnerships with actors involved in data collection, ensuring that, in the future, there is national ownership of the data. The government is interested in establishing a system that can move beyond humanitarian needs and is capable of informing development agencies about infrastructural damage and the sustainable investments necessary to address both urgent and longer-term needs and minimise the impacts of future hazards.

**Donors commit to fund flexibly to facilitate programme adaptation in response to community feedback. All agencies invest time and resources in funding these activities**

The 2015 and 2016 annual reviews of DFID's humanitarian programme both highlighted accountability to affected populations as an area where improvements should be made, including more effective feedback loops, less reliance on little-used hotlines and increased investment in two-way communication with disaster-affected populations (DFID RTE, 2018). Likewise, the Global GTS/OECD survey finds that current policies and mechanisms for engaging with affected populations have not translated into demand-driven programming (GTS and OECD, 2018).

**Ensure that, by the end of 2017, all humanitarian response plans – and strategic monitoring of them – demonstrate analysis and consideration of inputs from affected communities**

As indicated above, the HRPs for 2016 and 2017 demonstrated differing levels of commitment to improve on analysis and consideration of inputs from affected communities. However, there was no evidence, either in this review or clearly articulated in the HRPs, that this also involved clear mechanisms to ensure strategic monitoring of the same, that IASC guidance was considered and followed or how the various initiatives were being built on and sustained.

### 3.1.1 Conclusion

It is important for the humanitarian system globally and in Somalia to recognise that a 'participation

revolution’ does not stop at signed commitments, a statement of intent within an HRP or a range of ‘nice’ initiatives that can be picked up and dropped when funding is reduced or challenges emerge. Nor can the ‘participation revolution’ as articulated in the Grand Bargain be reduced to the development of a new checklist or tool for assessment and awareness-raising. Rather, a participation revolution should be a game-changer in terms of power relationships between the people agencies aim to assist and those who have resources and the ability to decide how they will be used. Genuine commitment and sustained action is a step forward in changing the traditional top-down dynamics of the humanitarian system, which typically influence who decides on a programme, and strives to ensure a two-way process that results in better, more appropriate and targeted responses.

Agencies will have to decide if they are going to react or be proactive in their approach to participation, engagement and communication with communities. They will also need to seek new ways to lessen the burden on communities faced with a plethora of individual mechanisms and initiatives, and ensure and facilitate sustained community voice and agency to inform response efforts. In the Somali context, agencies that have long been seen as holding power and influence should be shifting their approach to prioritise the opinions and needs of affected people in their initiatives – both at strategic and operational levels – if Somali ownership of and participation in aid decisions is to form the basis of humanitarian action in the future.

### 3.1.2 Recommendations

- **All actors in Somalia** should redouble their efforts to move from rhetorical commitments to sustained action, within the participation revolution. Collective participation and feedback systems should inform collective response priorities or changes. This should no longer be seen as a ‘nice thing to do’, or given up on as ‘tried and it hasn’t worked’. These systems should mirror stated plans and proposal commitments. There is a need to
- **The HCT** should define and sustain Grand Bargain priority commitments and indicators in Somalia, within the participation revolution workstream – including specific gender guidance (‘Aide-Memoire on Gender Mainstreaming in the Grand Bargain’) – to track progress and impact, and to gauge improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.
- **The government and state institutions** should prioritise involvement in establishing and monitoring the Grand Bargain commitments and indicators within the participation revolution, and identify best practice in government accountability mechanisms.
- **All actors** should find ways to increase the opportunities for local NGOs to participate in Grand Bargain discussions, and improve the participation of and engagement with communities and the monitoring of commitments and indicators, building on dialogue and actions from the Grand Bargain discussion in July 2018.
- **The HCT and ICCG** should hold specific meetings in early 2019 to review respective leadership responsibilities and support and actions for effective engagement with and accountability to target populations, implemented in a coherent and standardised way. Key incentives for a collective approach and indicators over 2019 and beyond should be established (as above), learning from previous challenges to the common services approach identified in 2016 and 2017.
- **The HCT, ICCG and DOCCs** should assess why the previous collective initiatives (in 2016 and 2017) did not lead to the sustained results expected, and reinvigorate the common feedback project in 2019 with agencies willing to participate. **Donors** should allocate specific funding for participating agencies. The above coordination mechanisms should build and support Somali social media platforms to improve

increase, speed up and sustain the collective pace and communication of priorities, commitments and implementation for all stakeholders in Somalia, with clear roles and responsibilities.

## The participation revolution in Somalia: putting people first?

ODI/HPG proposed global core commitment	Commitment (number)	Complementary commitments (number and text)
Improve leadership and governance mechanisms at the level of the HCT and cluster/sector mechanisms to ensure engagement with and accountability to people and communities affected by crises.	6.1	<p>6.4 <i>Build systematic links between feedback and corrective action to adjust programming.</i></p> <p>6.5 <i>Fund flexibly to facilitate programme adaptation in response to community feedback.</i></p>



links between collective feedback and corrective action to adjust programming, and to support more agile, transparent and secure feedback.

- **Donors** should collectively ensure that aid organisations are required to demonstrate how they have and plan to continue to engage with target populations, and whether/how they have designed and adapted their collective strategy and programmes accordingly.
- **Donors** must ensure there is sufficient flexibility in existing and future funding agreements to enable aid organisations to adapt their programmes in response to feedback solicited from target populations; budgets should consider the real-time needs of affected people. This should include ‘start-up’ and inception periods within all new programmes, to allow time for community engagement in programme design and throughout the programme cycle.
- **Aid organisations** must urgently institute appropriate incentives, including through performance management systems, standing agenda items and setting clear expectations within senior management meetings, to ensure that community participation and engagement policies are non-negotiable and implemented in a transparent, coherent and standardised way.
- **All organisations** should focus on making programmatic changes based on feedback received, or clearly communicate why they have not done so, and share that information with affected people.
- **The SNC** should share this report with its members and agree how the findings and recommendations will be fed back to stakeholders, especially communities involved in the review.

## 3.2 Increasing collaboration in multi-year planning and funding: ensuring a collective, effective and appropriate focus?

The idea underpinning the multi-year planning and funding workstream of the Grand Bargain is that multi-year planning facilitates more responsive programming. Multi-year planning must be based on shared analysis and understanding of needs and risks as they evolve, enabling improved collective humanitarian response and strengthening coherence

between humanitarian and other response elements.<sup>5</sup> Collaborative planning and funding mechanisms aim to minimise administrative costs, both for donors and aid organisations (OCHA, 2017).

One issue raised over a number of years concerns increasing donor funding/reporting requirements and burdensome administrative processes and paperwork, and due diligence processes that draw resources away from longer-term engagement and programming. Somalia is one of three countries (the other two are Iraq and Myanmar) to have embarked on a pilot to harmonise and simplify reporting requirements via a single narrative reporting form. Globally, 12 donors and 23 partners are testing out this harmonised reporting form.<sup>6</sup>

The multi-year planning and funding workstream contains three commitments, with an additional commitment included on harmonising and simplifying reporting requirements. Examples of successes and challenges in Somalia within each of the commitments are presented below.

**Increase multi-year, collaborative and flexible planning and multi-year funding instruments. Document the impacts on programme efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that recipients apply the same funding arrangements with all their implementing partners**

It has been noted that the response in Somalia in 2017 was more effective and timely thanks to pre-existing multi-year humanitarian financing, on which the response could be built. As noted in the DFID RTE, ‘the response showed the value of multi-year funding’ (DuBois et al., 2018). McDowell and McDowell (2017) notes that decisions to act were enabled by new or improved financing arrangements (forward financing, risk financing mechanisms and crisis modifiers).

This study did not explicitly identify a significant link between the collective UN multi-year strategy and the progress seen in collective multi-year financing for the 2017 response. On the contrary, respondents reported that the strategy is still rarely used as a guide to planning. Likewise, the 2018 independent report on the Grand Bargain found some progress at the level of individuals or groups, but limited progress with regard to collective or system-wide change.

Access to multi-year funding was the main concern for national actors interviewed for this study. Both

5 <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/increase-collaborative-humanitarian-multi-year-planning-and-funding>

6 See <https://www.grandbargain4ngos.org/workstreams/harmonize-and-simplify-reporting-requirements/>

national NGOs and government ministries expressed frustration at their dependence on international agencies to access donor funding and real-time information and data, and the limited transparency over project budgets and implementation processes. There is an impression that there is an overall reluctance among donors, at all levels, to provide funding to national civil society responders; national organisations do not generally receive direct multi-year funding, and most are short-term implementing contractors for UN agencies and INGOs. Some national organisations able to meet due diligence and humanitarian standards receive funding through the Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF). These work primarily across multiple states and sectors. The Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and donors from Islamic countries fund some local faith-based NGOs directly. While some programmes go through the government, notably ones funded by the World Bank and African Development Bank addressing resilience in rural communities, the government appears to be working with INGOs instead of local NGOs in their implementation.

Many donors and agencies restrict their funding to specific geographical areas, limiting the flexibility of coverage and forcing communities to move to areas where they know interventions are taking place. Funding restrictions have increased competition among NGOs which, at times, has created confusion over coverage and mandate. There is currently no coherent mapping of national actors operating in different locations.

**Support multi-year collaborative response plans through multi-year funding and monitor and evaluate the outcomes of these responses in at least five countries by the end of 2017**

The UN and the government have endorsed a Strategic Framework to support Somalia's humanitarian, development, political and security priorities as outlined in the NDP. This acknowledges that, despite decades of significant humanitarian assistance, these efforts have had limited impact in addressing the fundamental and chronic vulnerabilities that underpin and exacerbate the cyclical crises affecting the country. This in turn highlights the need for greater emphasis on building resilience through long-term development, while simultaneously addressing immediate humanitarian needs. Two indicators highlighted within the framework, and consistently identified as priorities by respondents within the study, are the existence of functioning disaster risk management and early

warning systems at federal and federal state level (gender- and age-sensitive); and progress towards a social protection system to mitigate the impacts of natural and man-made shocks, particularly for vulnerable populations.

The 2016–18 Humanitarian Strategy for Somalia (OCHA, 2016) aims to lead to significant long-term reductions in levels of humanitarian need. It is meant to link with other state-building and development-focused activities to address the underlying causes of recurrent humanitarian crises in Somalia, and to strengthen the resilience of Somali people and communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from future crises.

Efforts by donors include DFID's four-year humanitarian programme. Funding was provided to existing partners (BRCiS and SNS), which scaled up work for which they already had established networks and relationships and a track record of performance. The main funding mechanism, the IRF, enabled rapid disbursement and contracting for famine risk prevention, as well as continued resilience work. The response showed the value of multi-year funding (DuBois et al., 2018).

**Strengthen coordination to share analysis of needs and risks between the humanitarian and development sectors and to better align humanitarian and development planning tools and interventions, while respecting the principles of both**

Somalia is endowed with a wide range of coordination structures, all designed to propel, in the long term, a country-led and -owned process to strengthen capacity and accountability, supported by the international community. Respondents noted that coordination should transcend the boundaries between the humanitarian and development spheres and support the development of multi-year strategies and response plans based on a more rounded vision and understanding of what is needed on the ground. At the same time, however, participants in focus group discussions were sceptical that agencies would work collectively to harmonise planning and funding requests in a holistic and concrete way.

**Simplify and harmonise reporting requirements by reducing their volume, jointly deciding on common terminology, identifying core requirements and developing a common report structure (workstream 9)**

The complexity of funding proposal formats and the challenges of meeting different donors' conditions was highlighted as a key issue in the study. The

current system of defining needs and consolidating appeals annually was considered bureaucratic and short-term. There appeared to be very few links to the wider UN Somalia strategy, other than noting its existence within final appeals and documents, or a clear strategy of multi-year financing. Respondents at field level have to contend with a variety of reporting requirements, from within their agencies as well as externally. Local agencies mentioned having to go through multiple due diligence processes with INGOs and UN agencies. The Ground Truth Perceptions Survey in 2017 notes other obstacles, including donor restrictions on how funds are used and complicated realignment processes.

As noted above, Somalia is one of three countries piloting a harmonised reporting form. According to a mid-term assessment, a third of users feel that it is already saving time, though it is too early in the pilot to assess efficiency gains (Gaus, 2018).

Many agencies are unaware of the pilot, and it is unclear which donors and agencies are taking part. The pilot is also limited to reporting narratives, and does not cover financial management and reporting.

### 3.2.1 Conclusion

It was repeatedly mentioned in this review that the effectiveness of the response in 2017 was partly down to new or improved financing arrangements, including increased levels of multi-year and flexible funding. However, it was not clear whether such funding is linked to a collective multi-year strategy or plan, collectively owned by the diverse array of stakeholders in Somalia. It is also unclear whether the same financing agreements were applied with all implementing partners, particularly national actors. The emergency response must be seen within the broader country-level strategy and multi-year humanitarian plan to build the resilience of individuals and communities and provide early

## Increasing collaboration in multi-year planning and funding: ensuring a collective, effective and appropriate focus?

ODI/HPG proposed core commitment	Commitment (number)	Complementary commitments (number and text)
<b>Workstream 7: Multi-year planning and funding</b>		
Signatories increase multi-year, collaborative and flexible planning and multi-year funding. Aid organisations ensure that the same terms of multi-year funding agreements are applied with their implementing partners.	7.1	<p><i>8.2 Donors commit to reduce the degree of earmarking of funds contributed by governments and regional groups who currently provide low levels of flexible finance. Aid organisations in turn commit to do the same with their funding when channelling it through partners.</i></p> <p><i>8.5 Donors commit to progressively reduce the earmarking of their humanitarian contributions. The aim is to aspire to achieve a global target of 30% of humanitarian contributions that are non-earmarked or softly earmarked by 2020.</i></p>
<b>Workstream 9: Harmonise and simplify reporting requirements</b>		
Simplify and harmonise reporting requirements by the end of 2018 by reducing the volume of reporting, jointly deciding on common terminology, identifying core requirements and developing a common report structure.	9.1	<p><i>8.1 Jointly determine, on an annual basis, the most effective and efficient way of reporting on unearmarked and softly earmarked funding, and initiate this reporting by the end of 2017.</i></p> <p><i>8.3 Be transparent and regularly share information with donors outlining the criteria for how core and unearmarked funding is allocated (for example urgent needs, emergency preparedness, forgotten contexts, improved management).</i></p>

warning. Although a multi-year strategy exists for Somalia, annual humanitarian response plans have remained the focus of collective efforts and outcomes.

### 3.2.2 Recommendations

- The HCT should define Grand Bargain priority commitments, approaches and indicators for multi-year planning and funding, and harmonised and simplified reporting requirements in Somalia, and track progress and impacts and any improvements in efficiency and effectiveness. Consider and include the guidance provided by the ‘Aide-Memoire on Gender Mainstreaming in the Grand Bargain’.
- The HCT should drive the development of multi-year high-level strategic and response plans that set out a vision for moving beyond crisis response in protracted humanitarian contexts. This should be done collectively by teams from both humanitarian and development stakeholders. Guidance should be developed collectively by humanitarian and development stakeholders, utilising existing best practices, in support of the government.
- All organisations should ensure that, in line with the commitments, the same terms governing multi-year funding agreements are applied with all their implementing partners.
- Aid agencies should support the government of Somalia as part of the development of collective multi-year planning and priority-setting and coordinating investments to build human, technical and institutional capacity.
- Aid organisations should ensure that coordination links are built between humanitarian and development donors at field level through regular coordination fora, ensuring collective planning, action and progress tracking.
- All actors within the harmonised reporting pilot should seek to build momentum around next steps in 2019, and encourage more donors and agencies in Somalia to take part, with a focus on national agencies. They should also identify opportunities to harmonise financial reporting, again focusing on national partners.

## 3.3 Enhancing engagement between humanitarian and development actors: breaking down the silos?

Strengthening the links between humanitarian and development approaches, programming and funding was identified as a top priority at the WHS. The resulting ‘New Way of Working’ (NWO) initiative can be described as working towards achieving collective outcomes that reduce need, risk and vulnerability, over multiple years, based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors.<sup>7</sup> Although the ‘humanitarian–development nexus’ workstream has now been ‘mainstreamed’ within the other nine workstreams, it remains a critical area for consideration. In Somalia, a range of different actors support the idea that humanitarian action alone is unable to address cyclical shocks or resolve protracted crises. There is a need to change and refocus programmes to more clearly link humanitarian and development actors and actions.

The humanitarian and development workstream contains five commitments. Examples of successes and challenges in Somalia within each of the commitments are presented below.

**Use existing resources and capabilities better to reduce humanitarian needs over the long term, with a view to contributing to the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals. Significantly increase prevention, mitigation and preparedness for early action to anticipate and secure resources for recovery. This will need to be the focus not only of aid organisations and donors but also of the national government at all levels, civil society and the private sector.**

The FGS is developing increased capacity and is more involved in responding to crises, allocating funding for humanitarian interventions and establishing longer-term coordination platforms through the NDP processes.

The role of the government, national NGOs and local responders in responding to recurrent humanitarian crises and longer-term assistance needs in Somalia is growing in importance and necessity as the number of vulnerable people increases in the face of more frequent shocks. Focus group discussions and interviews pointed to the need for stronger government leadership in

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7 See <https://www.unocha.org/es/themes/humanitarian-development-nexus>

humanitarian coordination and operations. Despite the establishment of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management and the preparation of important national plans, including the NDP, the National Disaster Management Policy, the Resilience Framework and now the Social Protection Policy, the government has limited capacity, funding and coherence to implement these policies and steer agencies in the direction of national priorities. Other important policies are not yet developed or are still in draft form, including the IDP policy, which is key to directing the discussion on sustainable solutions to address the situation of displaced communities in Somalia.

Agencies highlighted political instability, internal disorganisation among ministries, overlapping roles and the continuous replacement of key ministry staff as key challenges limiting efforts to engage sustainably and work with government offices on longer-term programme design and implementation. Both international and national respondents also noted that this vacuum is often used as an excuse for lack of engagement. Collective clarity on strategic engagement, roles and responsibilities within inter-agency efforts on the support provided to government and key ministries could support more effective government leadership in future responses, linked to longer-term interventions.

Engagement with government is improving, with examples of joint monitoring between authorities and NGOs and secondment of staff to government entities (more at the municipal and district/state level than at federal level), and is much better than it was in 2011, when it was virtually non-existent. However, government participants in the focus group discussion pointed to a lack of clear and systematic coordination mechanisms with government offices linking existing resources and capacities to the development of the Humanitarian Response Plan and other long-term planning in Somalia. It was felt that the level of engagement with government has not as yet gone beyond a 'box-ticking' exercise, and that international agencies responsible for developing the HRP, in particular, are merely gathering government staff together in a room without ensuring that the right offices are represented, or giving participants the opportunity to edit, improve on and add data on highlighted priorities. Few agencies go through technical departments or engage directly with political leaders in ministries and the prime minister's office. Technical departments may be invited to launch events or sign off HRP documents, without being well informed on the details these documents contain.

There was no clear evidence of collective preparedness and contingency plans for early action linked to longer-term planning, and cited and used within the response, especially with regard to prepositioning for scale-up with government or new and national partners; increased situational and ongoing needs analysis; and overall levels of readiness for a large-scale drought. Respondents noted that 'siloed' humanitarian and development coordination mechanisms make it difficult to strategically and consistently discuss and action cross-mandated or multi-sectoral planning for prevention, mitigation, preparedness and recovery with a diverse range of actors. Although initiatives are being developed (see Box 6), convening and resource mobilisation power still lies within 'traditional' forms of coordination between donors, the UN, international agencies and larger NGOs. There is a common feeling that not only is there a need to increase the presence of 'new' actors, such as youth activists, within coordination fora outside of this 'traditional' construct, but also that donors could provide more incentives for actors in Somalia to coordinate across the humanitarian and development 'divide'. It was also suggested that donors should additionally organise regular humanitarian and development donor coordination meetings, involving a wider range of actors.

The private sector is becoming more active in responding to humanitarian crises. While private sector involvement in crisis response presents both risks and opportunities, it is crucial to seek new ways of engagement and partnership in Somalia. As discussed above, more than 50% of the Somali population has access to mobile phones, and a significant proportion has access to the internet. Banking, remittances and telecommunication sectors are among the most successful businesses across Africa, and these efforts need to be acknowledged and supported. It is also key to enforce the legal frameworks that guide these services. The UNDP/OCHA Global Connecting Business Initiative (CBI), which works to engage the private sector before, during and after emergencies, is currently developing a toolkit in collaboration with HPG to provide resources and guidance on how best to support private sector engagement in preventing, preparing for and responding to emergencies.

Many respondents in the study cited the DINA and RRF as important initiatives, and the RRF has been touted as one of the first attempts in Somalia to align all stakeholders – humanitarian, recovery and development – behind drought-related recovery and resilience-building. However, this was also recognised as a slow process, and there was concern that the

RRF has still not been launched. Many participants in this review recognised that the crisis of 2017 had encouraged increased engagement by a range of different actors and had given momentum to these initiatives, but it is unclear if this will be sustained given the constraints of traditional global funding mechanisms and siloed approaches.

**Invest in durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced people and ensure sustainable support to migrants, returnees and host/receiving communities, as well as for other situations of recurring vulnerability**

According to UNHCR, 2.1 million people were displaced between January 2016 and August 2018, 1.2 million of whom were displaced by drought, bringing the total figure for displacement to 2.6 million. In discussions for this study, host communities and IDPs spoke of displacement lasting anywhere from six months to 13 years. There is a view that displacement is linked to rural-to-urban migration, and some in our focus groups confirmed that they had found ‘survival’ in urban centres, and that it would be hard for them to return home.

When discussing recurring vulnerabilities and the impact that the aid response had on famine and famine

mortality in 2017, it is more appropriate to speak of reducing the risk of famine rather than its prevention, because the basic conditions that put people at risk of famine have not been mitigated. These famine risk factors seem not to have changed, and may indeed have worsened. Clan dynamics and marginalisation also play an important role in determining recurrent vulnerability and ultimately mortality, especially famine-related mortality. Some donors (DFID was one) noted that the response to the 2017 drought took specific steps to target assistance not just according to generic IPC classifications, but also combined this data with information on the impact of social exclusion and historical disempowerment. The UN recognised this by making protection central to the response/HRP in 2017, as did other agencies. However, although protection strategies and plans are said to be in place, and are well-articulated in Somalia, they are not sufficiently operational.

IGAD heads of state and government met in Nairobi in March 2017 at a Special Summit on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia. A mapping exercise led by UNHCR of current and planned humanitarian and development initiatives in the region, including Somalia, was intended to form the basis for IGAD, member

## Box 6: UNDP Drought Impact and Needs Assessment and Recovery and Resilience Framework

The FGS requested a Drought Impact and Needs Assessment (DINA) and subsequent Resilience and Recovery Framework (RRF) in August 2017 to identify the root causes of recurrent drought and develop a strategy for medium-term recovery and long-term resilience. The DINA and RRF align with the HRP, NDP and the National Disaster Management Policy.

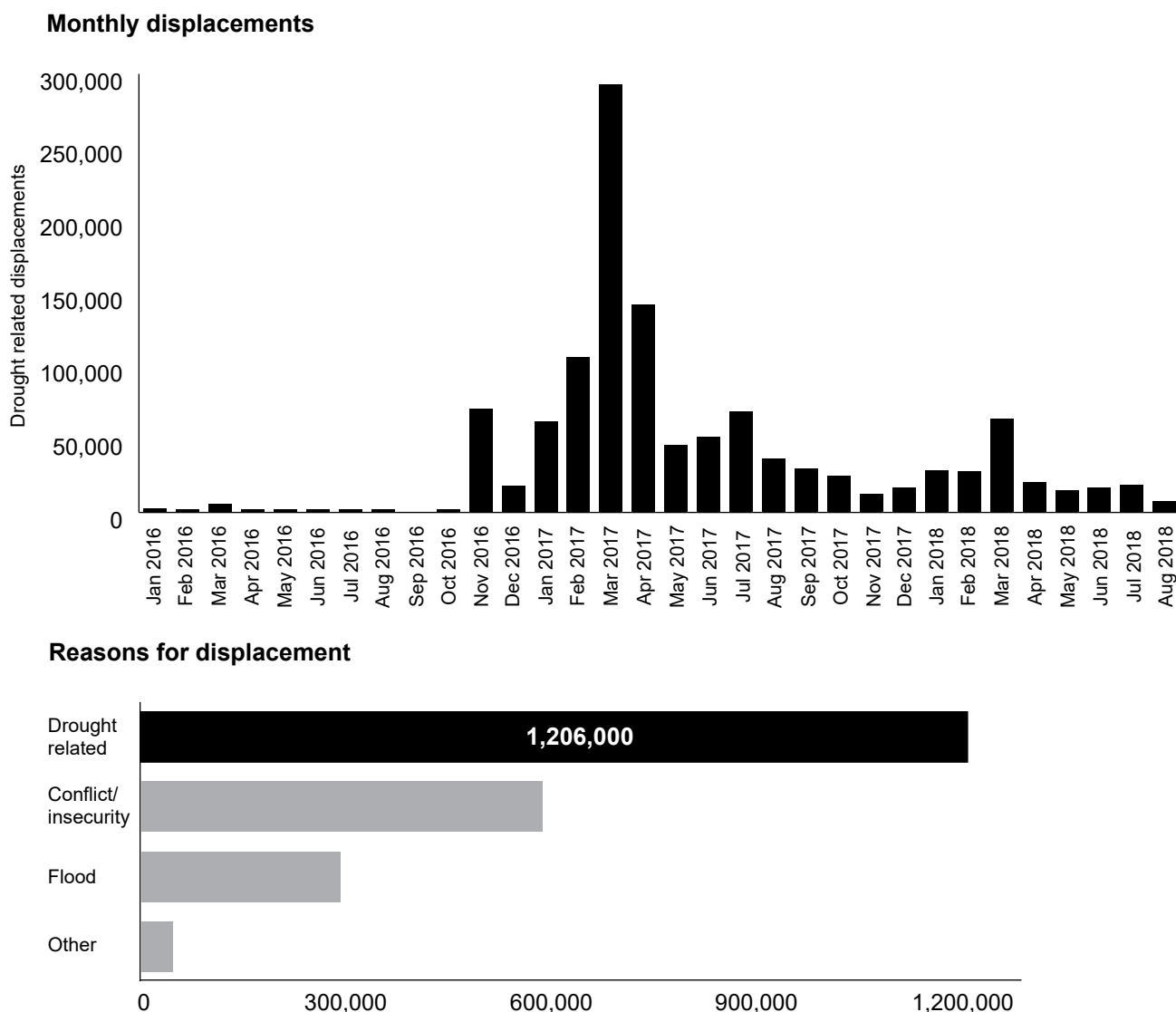
The DINA was carried out with the support of the EU, the UN and the World Bank. The assessment has analysed the impact of the ongoing drought and famine risk on lives and livelihoods in Somalia. According to the assessment, damage and losses attributed to the drought are expected to exceed \$3.25 billion, with total recovery needs estimated at \$1.77 billion. Agriculture (irrigated and rain-fed crops) and urban development and municipal services are the most-affected sectors, representing 28% and 17% of total needs, respectively. The programming and prioritisation process under the RRF will be the first real attempt in Somalia to align all stakeholders – humanitarian, recovery, and development –

behind drought-related recovery and resilience-building efforts. The RRF is a continuation and actualisation of the DINA, and represents the framework for detailed rationalisation and prioritisation of needs and the development of recovery activities, in coordination with the HRP.

Efforts to align the HRP, the DINA and the RRF are intended to move beyond the traditional and artificial distinction between humanitarian and recovery interventions. The most effective recovery strategies work across the humanitarian–recovery–development nexus, and take a multi-partner, multi-sector, integrated approach that combines humanitarian, recovery and resilience-building interventions to meet immediate humanitarian needs, strengthen livelihoods and build resilience to future disasters.

*Source: UNDP Somalia, Drought Impact and Needs Assessment and Recovery and Resilience Framework ([www.so.undp.org/content/somalia/en/home/climate-and-disaster-resilience/delivering-long-term-resilience-in-parallel-with-vital-humanitar0.html](http://www.so.undp.org/content/somalia/en/home/climate-and-disaster-resilience/delivering-long-term-resilience-in-parallel-with-vital-humanitar0.html))*

**Figure 2: Monthly displacements, January 2016–August 2018**



Source: UNHCR Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN).

states and partners to establish a system to regularly monitor the financing of programmes and investments linked to durable solutions and humanitarian assistance to Somali refugees (IGAD, 2017).

The FGS and the UN, through the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/RC/HC), have been spearheading the Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI) since 2016, together with the World Bank, NGOs and the international community. Anecdotal evidence from the study suggests that communities where resilience programming had been targeted were indeed more resilient (e.g. they were able to withstand shocks or reach out to and help neighbouring communities). However, participants cautioned that such programmes are still in the early stages

of implementation, and indicated that many other factors, including insecurity, economic stagnation and political instability, all affect implementation. DFID is conducting an impact study as part of its humanitarian programme in Somalia to assess longitudinal change and the impact of different combinations of resilience interventions. This should provide evidence on impact and recommendations for improvement and possible scaling up of resilience programming in Somalia.

Agencies working on resilience and durable solutions held a workshop in December 2017 to develop recommendations to increase coherence between initiatives in resilience and durable solutions and Somali-led processes currently in place in Somalia. The workshop concluded that agencies should work within the NDP, and undertake area-based,

cross-sectoral, collaborative programming that takes account of the specific needs of displacement-affected communities and uses participatory approaches that empower key stakeholders.

These examples demonstrate a range of initiatives and investments currently being implemented in Somalia to address recurring vulnerabilities. Given this plethora of initiatives, many respondents noted that they had to make specific decisions on which collective initiatives they should engage with and invest time and resources in. Streamlining and more clearly coordinating these initiatives could reduce duplication and maximise investment.

### Increase social protection programmes and strengthen national and local systems and coping mechanisms in order to build resilience in fragile contexts

As mentioned, prioritising resilience programming early on was a major lesson from the 2011 response. Several major resilience programmes, including the UN Joint Resilience Programme, the Somalia Resilience Programme, BRCiS and SNS in South Central Somalia, have been widely mentioned, along with the increased use of cash in the 2017 response. Many respondents noted that early discussions on how cash programming within the 2017 response could be adapted for social protection programmes, facilitated by the government, are crucial. Discussions within the Cash Working Group and among agencies have begun, and should be encouraged.

There are also traditional arrangements and mechanisms for social safety nets across the country. These need to be reinforced, alongside initiatives to facilitate people’s own diagnosis of needs and

assistance, linked to sustainable government plans and improved basic services. Agrarian communities in Somalia traditionally help each other cultivate land, and provide support to families when crops fail. Nomads support each other during droughts. Community discussions pointed to the range of essential support that communities receive. For example, every year 2 million Somalis from the diaspora send approximately \$1.4 billion to Somalia. These remittances account for 23% of Somalia’s GDP and exceed any amount of aid given to the country (World Bank, 2016). All these efforts should be supported.

In the Ground Truth Solutions perception survey, less than half of respondents felt that the support they received would enable them to live without aid in the future. The majority of IDPs do not believe they can achieve self-reliance.

### Undertake joint multi-hazard risk and vulnerability analysis, and multi-year planning where feasible and relevant, with national, regional and local coordination. Develop a shared vision for outcomes between the humanitarian, development, stabilisation and peacebuilding communities

It was repeatedly stressed, within the review, that supporting the variety and specificity of groups in Somalia is essential. One way to achieve this is through joint multi-hazard risk and vulnerability analysis, focused on enhancing resilience tailored to different communities. The DINA is a clear start in joint multi-hazard risk and vulnerability analysis. However the results of the DINA were not seen as being used in upcoming programme planning for agencies in 2018.

**Table 2: Sources of support mentioned by respondents**

Actors/sources of charity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Zakat and/or sadaqa					X Y					
Remittances				Y				X		
Government							X	Y		
Private sector					Y	X				
Diaspora communities							Y			X
INGOs	X Y									
L/NNGOs			Y	X						
Red Cross		X							Y	
UN		Y	X							
None/others										X Y

Key: X = Mogadishu residents; Y = Baidoa residents; shaded cells = average

Ranking: 1: high importance; 9: low importance for Mogadishu and Baidoa (10 indicates non/other support)



## Box 7: The Humanitarian Coordination Forum

In 2017, the OIC, in partnership with the Muslim Charities Forum (MCF) and The Humanitarian Forum (THF), jointly convened a Humanitarian Coordination Forum under the auspices of the FGS to strengthen partnerships and raise awareness of the drought situation. The meeting was attended by key stakeholders including local Islamic and non-Islamic charities, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, embassies and the FGS. The meeting emphasised the need for effective coordination of responses and the establishment of a central information management system through the National Humanitarian Coordination Centre of the FGS.

Key messages from the meeting included:

- Support the newly established Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management.
- Revisit, revitalise and demand that donors follow the commitments made under the Grand Bargain.
- Establish centralised coordination systems that bring together clusters and other important actors delivering aid through the National Humanitarian Coordination Centre.
- Prioritise cash to enable markets to continue to function; focus particularly on interventions in places of origin to avoid further displacement.
- Build resilience by supporting communities, local NGOs and households to cope with and recover from recurrent shocks, including through social protection programmes, cash transfers, diversified livelihood opportunities and job creation.
- Increase the focus on long-term solutions and investments, particularly in infrastructure (roads, access to water and other facilities).
- In addition to emergency relief, stakeholders should plan for long-term programmes and projects focusing on the livestock economy, agriculture and sustainable/regenerative livelihoods programming.

The FAM, launched in 2018, is a global mechanism that will use technology to provide more powerful early warning to identify when food crises threaten to turn into famines. These alerts will trigger pre-arranged funding and action plans by donors, humanitarian agencies and governments to generate earlier and more efficient interventions.<sup>8</sup> There are ongoing discussions in Somalia on the initiative, which has the potential to build on learning from the 2011 and 2017 responses, with clearer predictive early warning triggers, contingency plans and pre-agreed financing based on indicators and triggers for response.

### **Galvanise new partnerships with multilateral development banks and the private sector that bring additional capabilities and resources to crisis-affected states**

The Drought Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods Program (DRSLP) is a multinational investment programme financed by the ADP. It is intended to address the impacts of recurrent drought in the Horn of Africa within the framework of the IGAD Drought Disaster and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI). The primary goal of the DRSLP is to contribute to

poverty reduction, increase food security and build capacity for drought resilience and accelerated sustainable economic growth among pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in the arid and semi-arid lands of the IGAD region. The second phase of the programme (DRSLP II) covers Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. The Somalia component is supported by a grant of \$22.5 million from the ADB. In late 2016, the ADB approved a new infrastructure investment in Somalia of \$350 million.<sup>9</sup>

A range of strategic plans and initiatives within Somalia and the region have sought to improve and deepen engagement between humanitarian and development actors. It has been noted that there is a need to improve coherence between these initiatives and improve collective ownership, led by the government. The HCT, ICCG and other international coordination mechanisms in Somalia were seen as still doing business in a scattered way. The challenge lies in ensuring the centrality of communities and an appreciation of local and national systems within current initiatives; this could be more clearly articulated, streamlined, strategically coherent and systematic, to reduce duplication.

8 See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/09/23/united-nations-world-bank-humanitarian-organizations-launch-innovative-partnership-to-end-famine>

9 See <http://www.mdbcap.com/2016/10/new-infrastructure-fund-for-somalia.html>

It was additionally suggested that some initiatives and approaches can undermine others, and it is not always clear which strategic framework or initiative is a priority within Somalia; many respondents in this review felt that government planning should be the focus, but in reality this is often a box-ticking exercise on inclusion and government leadership. As noted by the recent RTE, DFID’s engagement with the FGS, and with the organisations DFID funds, should be more strategic, with clear goals to encourage and support the fulfilment of the state’s responsibilities towards its citizens.

### 3.3.1 Recommendations

- **The HCT** should define Grand Bargain collective priority commitments, approaches and indicators on engagement between humanitarian and development actors in Somalia, and track whether these have resulted in improved efficiency and effectiveness. These should consider and include the guidance provided by the ‘Aide-Memoire on Gender Mainstreaming in the Grand Bargain’.
- **The HCT, with UNDP, UNHCR and regional/ Somali government actors**, should work towards coherence between the various humanitarian and development strategies and initiatives in Somalia. There is a need to develop collective global advocacy on where current expectations within the ‘international system’ present obstacles to or facilitate this, for example in relation to funding mechanisms (UN appeals, RRF and IGAD).
- **All agencies** should ensure that assessments of immediate humanitarian and protection needs are complemented by deeper, area-based analysis. The development of collective, measurable outcomes should encompass emergency lifesaving and humanitarian needs, strengthened systems for local service delivery, increased economic opportunities and increased capacity of local institutions. Measuring such outcomes would also help generate evidence of what works in longer-term solutions-oriented programming from the outset (REDSS, 2017).
- **All actors** should coordinate on improving information systems for better evidence-based analysis to support decision-making. These systems should be owned within Somalia. This includes maximising relationships with national universities and national research institutions and with the FAM initiative. **The government** also needs to build in-country information management systems.
- **All organisations** should ensure that organisational ‘brands’ do not become an obstacle to collective longer-term outcomes and actions in favour of greater strategic engagement, cooperation and collaboration among key stakeholders – national governments, national agencies including academia and research institutions, regional economic communities and international partners. This should include calling out situations where an agency ‘brand’ competes with collective outcomes.
- **The humanitarian system** should find ways to encourage ‘disruptors’ and ‘non-traditional actors’ in strategic developments and initiatives, so that more innovative solutions can be found.
- **All actors in Somalia** should hold a specific meeting in 2019 on streamlining and improving coordination mechanisms and facilitating increased dialogue between humanitarian and development actors, and establish, where relevant, government co-chairs of current coordination bodies where there is no existing representation (e.g. the HCT, ICCG), to facilitate clear communication channels with government offices and to avoid side-lining government technical staff.

## Enhancing engagement between humanitarian and development actors: breaking down the silos?

ODI/HPG proposed core commitment	Original commitment (number)	Complementary commitments (number and text)
Perform joint multi-hazard risk and vulnerability analysis, and multi-year planning where feasible and relevant, with national, regional and local coordination to achieve a shared vision for outcomes. Such a shared vision will be developed on the basis of shared risk analysis between humanitarian, development, stabilisation and peace-building communities	10.4	<p>5.7 Conduct risk and vulnerability analysis with development partners and local authorities, in line with humanitarian principles, to ensure the alignment of humanitarian and development programming</p> <p>7.3 Strengthen existing coordination efforts to share analysis of needs and risks between humanitarian and development sectors and to better align humanitarian and development planning tools and interventions, while respecting the principles of both.</p>

- **All agencies** should seek to maximise the role of civil society actors. This will require changes, including in the way donors, the UN and INGOs support national actors. Power imbalances need to be addressed and spaces created, particularly at local level, where the

full range of national organisations can take part in decision-making. Participants felt less hopeful that Grand Bargain commitments could be achieved without changes to ways of working with national actors and new approaches that allow direct investment in local responders.



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# 4 Conclusions and recommendations

There was unequivocal agreement in feedback and reports that the national and international response was successful in averting famine in Somalia in 2017. Most respondents for this study noted that not only did alerts of a possible famine drive clear collective advocacy and a different response, but also helped to ensure effective humanitarian response in Somalia as a collective ‘end goal’, rather than agencies being caught up first in considerations of brand and competition. There was a clear collective commitment among individuals within the international arena and Somalis, underpinned by vivid memories of 2011. Support from Somali communities both inside and outside the country arrived more rapidly, and the OIC and NGOs played an important role, supported by Muslim countries, notably Turkey, Qatar, Malaysia, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Donors allocated funds earlier and timed contributions better, with higher levels of funding to the humanitarian appeal received in the first quarter.

The 2017 response was better organised and coordinated, and there was better engagement, improved coordination and less duplication. As noted by UNDP: ‘The response has demonstrated that collectively, it is possible to prevent famine in Somalia’ (UNDP, 2017). However, while the various actors involved moved decisively to adapt existing activities and scale up ahead of the looming crisis, there was no clear evidence of collective strategy, preparedness or contingency planning, especially linked to scaling up with new and national partners. Collective situational and ongoing needs analysis and overall levels of readiness for a large-scale drought appeared low in the initial stages, especially given how common such crises are in Somalia, and the basic conditions that put Somalis at risk of famine have not been addressed. There are also questions as to whether ‘the system’ will have the same focus in the future, and whether, as they become more severe and more frequent, it has the ability to respond adequately to future shocks.

Respondents did not see the global reform commitments related to the Grand Bargain as a catalyst for action, but they did see them as mobilising

political will and as relevant to Somalia. There is a clear need to define the Grand Bargain priority commitments, approaches and indicators, and track progress and impacts and any improvements in efficiency and effectiveness. This should include the guidance provided by the ‘Aide-Memoire on Gender Mainstreaming in the Grand Bargain’. The international humanitarian community must redouble its efforts to develop supportive, long-term partnerships and to build local capacity and resilience before, during and after an emergency, and ensure that the humanitarian coordination system is an enabler and is accessible to national actors. It is essential to challenge the narrative of urgency and existing rules and practices as excuses for business as usual, and for a failure to learn for future responses.

Many of the findings and recommendations set out here are not new: they reflect commitments already made by many agencies, the conclusions of many evaluations and reports on Somalia and views openly expressed by many in Somalia, in meetings and through reports and articles. Given this, will the energy and focus seen in 2017 translate into actual sustained momentum driving the transformative change many seek, or will it end up as a set of ‘nice to do’ initiatives, with a few tweaks to inconsequential elements around the edges? Any shift towards the concrete commitments and indicators laid out in the Grand Bargain requires vision, leadership, deliberate strategic policy choices and investments to ensure that progress is made. Meeting these challenges requires a shared purpose not only between the ‘traditional’ agencies of the humanitarian architecture in Somalia, but also within and between the government, ‘non-traditional’ actors and, most importantly, Somalis themselves. Incentives for mutual cooperation in the interest of the people agencies aim to assist need to outweigh incentives to compete for resources and visibility. Coming years present a critical window of opportunity to build on the achievements and gains made nationally and internationally among development and humanitarian partners, and effectively reduce risk and vulnerability in Somalia (UNDP, 2017).

## 4.1 Recommendations

### The ‘participation revolution’ in Somalia: putting people first?

- **All actors in Somalia** should redouble their efforts to move from rhetorical commitments to sustained action within the participation revolution. Collective participation and feedback systems should inform collective response priorities or changes. This should no longer be seen as a ‘nice thing to do’ or given up on as ‘tried and it hasn’t worked’. These systems should mirror stated plans and proposal commitments. There is a need to increase, speed up and sustain the collective pace and communication of priorities, commitments and implementation for all stakeholders in Somalia, with clear roles and responsibilities.
- **The HCT** should define and sustain Grand Bargain priority commitments and indicators in Somalia, including specific gender guidance, to track progress and impact and to gauge any improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.
- **The government and state institutions** should prioritise involvement in establishing and monitoring the Grand Bargain commitments and indicators within the participation revolution and identify best practice in government accountability mechanisms.
- **All actors** should find ways to increase the opportunities for local NGOs to participate in Grand Bargain discussions, and improve the participation of and engagement with communities and the monitoring of commitments and indicators, building on dialogue and actions from the Grand Bargain discussion in July 2018.
- **The HCT and ICCG** should hold specific meetings in early 2019 to review respective leadership responsibilities, support and actions for effective engagement with and accountability to target populations, implemented in a coherent and standardised way. Key incentives for a collective approach and indicators over 2019 and beyond should be established, learning from previous challenges to the common services approach identified in 2016 and 2017.
- **The HCT, ICCG and DOCCs** should consider why previous collective initiatives (in 2016 and 2017) did not lead to the sustained results expected, and reinvigorate the common feedback project in 2019 with agencies willing to participate. **Donors** should allocate specific funding for participating agencies. The above coordination mechanisms should build and support Somali social media platforms to improve links between collective feedback and corrective action to adjust programming, and to support more agile, transparent and secure feedback.
- **Donors** should collectively require aid organisations to demonstrate how they have engaged, and plan to continue to engage, with target populations, *and* whether/how they have designed and adapted their collective strategy and programmes accordingly.
- **Donors** must ensure sufficient flexibility in existing and future funding agreements to enable aid organisations to adapt their programmes in response to feedback from target populations; budgets should consider the real-time needs of affected people. This should include ‘start-up’ and/or inception periods within all new programmes, to ensure time for community engagement in programme design and throughout the programme cycle.
- **Aid organisations** must urgently institute appropriate incentives, including through performance management systems, standing agenda items and clear expectations within senior management meetings, to ensure that community participatory and engagement policies are non-negotiable and implemented in a transparent, coherent and standardised way.
- **All organisations** should focus on investing time in making programmatic changes based on feedback received, or clearly communicate the reasons why programmes have not been changed, and share that information with affected people.
- **The SNC** should share this report with its members and agree how the findings and recommendations will be fed back to stakeholders, especially communities involved in the review.

### Increasing collaboration in multi-year planning and funding: ensuring a collective, effective and appropriate focus?

- **The HCT** should define Grand Bargain priority commitments, approaches and indicators for multi-year planning and funding, and harmonised and simplified reporting requirements in Somalia, and track progress and impacts and any improvements in efficiency and effectiveness. Consider and include the guidance provided by the ‘Aide-Memoire on Gender Mainstreaming in the Grand Bargain’.
- **The HCT** should drive the development of multi-year high-level strategic and response plans that set out a vision for moving beyond crisis response in protracted humanitarian contexts. This should be done collectively by teams from both humanitarian and development stakeholders. Guidance should be developed

collectively by humanitarian and development stakeholders, utilising existing best practices, in support of the government.

- **All organisations** should ensure that, in line with the commitments, the same terms governing multi-year funding agreements are applied with all their implementing partners.
- **Aid agencies** should support the government of Somalia as part of the development of collective multi-year planning and priority-setting and coordinating investments to build human, technical and institutional capacity.
- **Aid organisations** should ensure that coordination links are built between humanitarian and development donors at field level through regular coordination fora, ensuring collective planning, action and progress tracking.
- **All actors within the harmonised reporting pilot** should seek to build momentum around next steps in 2019, and encourage more donors and agencies in Somalia to take part, with a focus on national agencies. They should also identify opportunities to harmonise financial reporting, again focusing on national partners.

#### Enhancing engagement between humanitarian and development actors: breaking down the silos?

- **The HCT** should define Grand Bargain collective priority commitments, approaches and indicators in Somalia on engagement between humanitarian and development actors, and track whether these have resulted in improved efficiency and effectiveness. These should consider and include the guidance provided by the ‘Aide-Memoire on Gender Mainstreaming in the Grand Bargain’.
  - **The HCT, with UNDP, UNHCR and regional/ Somali government actors**, should work towards coherence between the various humanitarian and development strategies and initiatives in Somalia. There is a need to develop collective global advocacy on where current expectations within the ‘international system’ present obstacles to or facilitate this, for example in relation to funding mechanisms (UN appeals, RRF and IGAD).
  - **All agencies** should ensure that assessments of immediate humanitarian and protection needs are complemented by deeper, area-based analysis. The development of collective, measurable outcomes should encompass emergency lifesaving and humanitarian needs, strengthened systems for local service delivery, increased economic opportunities
- and increased capacity of local institutions. Measuring such outcomes would also help generate evidence of what works in longer-term solutions-oriented programming from the outset (REDSS, 2017).
- **All actors** should coordinate on improving information systems for better evidence-based analysis to support decision-making. These systems should be owned within Somalia. This includes maximising relationships with national universities and national research institutions and with the FAM initiative. **The government** also needs to build in-country information management systems.
  - **All organisations** should ensure that organisational ‘brands’ do not become an obstacle to collective longer-term outcomes and actions in favour of greater strategic engagement, cooperation and collaboration among key stakeholders – national governments, national agencies including academia and research institutions, regional economic communities and international partners. This should include calling out situations where an agency ‘brand’ competes with collective outcomes.
  - **The humanitarian system** should find ways to encourage ‘disruptors’ and ‘non-traditional actors’ in strategic developments and initiatives, so that more innovative solutions can be found.
  - **All actors in Somalia** should hold a specific meeting in 2019 on streamlining and improving coordination mechanisms and facilitating increased dialogue between humanitarian and development actors, and establish, where relevant, government co-chairs of current coordination bodies where there is no existing representation (e.g. the HCT, ICCG), to facilitate clear communication channels with government offices and to avoid side-lining government technical staff.
  - **All agencies** should seek to maximise the role of civil society actors. This will require changes, including in the way donors, the UN and INGOs support national actors. Power imbalances need to be addressed and spaces created, particularly at local level, where the full range of national organisations can take part in decision-making. Participants felt less hopeful that Grand Bargain commitments could be achieved without changes to ways of working with national actors and new approaches that allow direct investment in local responders.





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# Annex 1: Agencies interviewed

Canadian High Commission

CARE International

Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

European Civil protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) Somalia

Gargaar Relief and Development Organisation (GREDO)

German Federal Foreign Office

Hormuud Foundation

International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)

Mayor of Baidoa, Somalia South West State

Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Somalia South West State

Ministry of Resettlement, Returnees/IDPs and Diaspora Affairs, Somalia South West State

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Somalia

Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (REDSS)

Save the Children

Save Somalia Women and Children (SSWC)

Somalia Commission for Refugee

Somalia NGO Consortium (SNC)

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Somalia

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Somalia

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Somalia

USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



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# Annex 2: Grand Bargain Commitments

## Work stream – Participation Revolution

Aid organisations and donors commit to:

1. Improve leadership and governance mechanisms at the level of the humanitarian country team and cluster/sector mechanisms to ensure engagement with and accountability to people and communities affected by crises.
2. Develop common standards and a coordinated approach for community engagement and participation, with the emphasis on inclusion of the most vulnerable, supported by a common platform for sharing and analysing data to strengthen decision-making, transparency, and accountability and limit duplication.
3. Strengthen local dialogue and harness technologies to support more agile, transparent but appropriately secure feedback.
4. Build systematic links between feedback and corrective action to adjust programming.

Donors commit to:

1. Fund flexibly to facilitate programme adaptation in response to community feedback.
2. Invest time and resources to fund these activities.

Aid organisations commit to:

1. Ensure that, by the end of 2017, all humanitarian response plans – and strategic monitoring of them – demonstrate analysis and consideration of inputs from affected communities.

## Work stream – Multi-year Planning and Funding

Aid organisations and donors commit to:

1. Increase multi-year, collaborative and flexible planning and multi-year funding instruments and document the impacts on programme efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that recipients apply the same funding arrangements with their implementing partners.
2. Support in at least five countries by the end of 2017 multi-year collaborative planning and response plans through multi-year funding and monitor and evaluate the outcomes of these responses.
3. Strengthen existing coordination efforts to share analysis of needs and risks between the humanitarian and development sectors and to better align humanitarian and development planning tools and interventions while respecting the principles of both.

**Multi-year planning and funding work stream co-conveners request:** Report the percentage and total value of multi-year agreements<sup>1</sup> you have provided (as a donor) or received and provided to humanitarian partners (as an agency) in 2017, and any earmarking conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Multiyear funding is funding provided for two or more years based on a firm commitment at the outset.

## **Work stream – Reporting Requirements**

Aid organisations and donors commit to:

1. Simplify and harmonise reporting requirements by the end of 2018 by reducing its volume, jointly deciding on common terminology, identifying core requirements and developing a common report structure.
2. Invest in technology and reporting systems to enable better access to information.
3. Enhance the quality of reporting to better capture results, enable learning and increase the efficiency of reporting.

## **Work stream – Humanitarian–Development Engagement**

Aid organisations and donors commit to:

1. Use existing resources and capabilities better to shrink humanitarian needs over the long term with the view of contributing to the outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals. Significantly increase prevention, mitigation and preparedness for early action to anticipate and secure resources for recovery. This will need to be the focus not only of aid organisations and donors but also of national governments at all levels, civil society, and the private sector.
2. Invest in durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced people and sustainable support to migrants, returnees and host/receiving communities, as well as for other situations of recurring vulnerabilities.
3. Increase social protection programmes and strengthen national and local systems and coping mechanisms in order to build resilience in fragile contexts.
4. Perform joint multi-hazard risk and vulnerability analysis, and multi-year planning where feasible and relevant, with national, regional and local coordination in order to achieve a shared vision for outcomes. Such a shared vision for outcomes will be developed on the basis of shared risk analysis between humanitarian, development, stabilisation and peacebuilding communities.
5. Galvanise new partnerships that bring additional capabilities and resources to crisis-affected states through Multilateral Development Banks within their mandate and foster innovative partnerships with the private sector.



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# Annex 3: Concept note

## Independent evaluation for the 2017 pre-famine response in Somalia through the lens of the Grand Bargain

### Background

In 2017, Somalia was at risk of famine. Rainfall was below average for the third season in a row, resulting in declining crop harvests and livestock productivity. By May 2017, 6.7 million people were at risk of food insecurity and an estimated 6.2 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, including some 388,000 acutely malnourished children in need of urgent nutrition support and 1.2 million people displaced by drought and conflict. Corollary effects of cholera/acute watery diarrhoea and measles outbreaks also remained a major concern.

The humanitarian community mobilised quickly when the pre-famine alert was raised in February 2017, and the government declared a national disaster on 28 February. The UN sought to mobilise \$825 million for the emergency famine response and issued a Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia with the following objectives:

1. Provide life-saving and life-sustaining integrated multi-sectoral assistance to reduce acute humanitarian needs among the most vulnerable.
2. Reduce acute malnutrition levels in settlements for internally displaced people and host communities through integrated multi-sectoral emergency response.
3. Reinforce the protection of the displaced and other vulnerable groups at risk.
4. Support the restoration of livelihoods, promote basic services to build resilience to recurrent shocks, and catalyse more sustainable solutions.

Soon after the response began, access problems and funding shortages limited its early effects; while famine was successfully averted, significant needs, including but not limited to food insecurity and malnutrition, persisted. In 2018, above-average rainfall in March–June, coupled with continued national and international famine prevention programmes, have had a positive impact on food security and livelihoods, but flooding, violent conflict and internal displacement mean that close to half of the population of Somalia continues to require humanitarian assistance.

Current responses are taking place against the backdrop of two other periods of severe food insecurity in Somalia, in 2008 and in 2011. Myriad evaluations and studies documented the lessons from those experiences. For example, research on the 2008 famine response called for greater use of cash assistance and approaches that combined emergency assistance with resilience-building and livelihoods support. Research on the 2011 famine showed that a variety of local and international Somali groups played a central role in the effort to protect lives and livelihoods in that crisis. Yet it is unclear whether and to what degree current responses have considered and benefitted from those lessons.

Since 2011, there has also been agreement on a new development framework in the SDGs and humanitarian system reforms as part of the World Humanitarian Summit's Grand Bargain. Other global initiatives, such as the New Way of Working, seek a closer working relationship between humanitarian and development actors, and the UN Secretary-General's focus on prevention initiatives aims to reorient the multilateral system around early and anticipatory action. Many of these reforms are pertinent to the Somalia context today, yet there is little evidence of the impact these initiatives are having on current operations.

In August 2018, the Somalia NGO Consortium commissioned an independent evaluation of the 2017 response to the Somalia pre-famine crisis to provide an assessment of the overall response, document the lessons from that response and provide both immediate and longer-term suggestions towards improving responses in the future. It also wished to evaluate the current response in light of new reform commitments, in particular those pertaining to the participation

revolution, the humanitarian–development nexus and multiyear financing, and based on identified lessons from previous response efforts. Recognising that many other evaluations of the 2017 famine response are under way within other organisations, this study aims to build on that research, while also analysing the response efforts within the context of overall, system-wide commitments to reform.

## **Objectives and approach**

The overarching objective of this evaluation is to review the overall humanitarian response for the 2017 Somali famine to inform and improve current and future operations and performance.

To this end, HPG will deliver an independent evaluation of the famine response in Somalia in 2017 using three levels of analysis: 1) by analysing progress on global commitments, including the World Humanitarian Summit/Grand Bargain, as well as other global commitments to systemic and operational reform, and in particular those related to humanitarian and development links, multi-year planning and funding and the participation revolution; 2) to understand whether those commitments have helped or undermined the objectives of the response in key priority areas; and 3) by assessing the achievements and challenges of the response in light of lessons identified as part of earlier evaluations of similar responses in Somalia (specifically the 2011 famine response and to a lesser degree the 2008 response). The analysis will also draw on a thorough review of existing documentation and literature, along with interviews with a range of stakeholders based in Somalia, in the region and globally, and focus group discussions in Somalia itself.

In doing so, the research will examine two geographic locations within Somalia, with a focus on displacement, to be determined as part of the initial phase of research, to highlight specific examples of good practice, analyse areas of common challenge and produce specific and actionable recommendations to apply to current and future responses and to consider at a systemic level and over the longer term.

To accomplish this, we have built a strong team combining HPG’s extensive network of independent and experienced researchers with evaluators and researchers from regional and local institutions.

## **Methodology**

The report will address the following questions:

1. To what extent and in what ways did the response in 2017 take into consideration global reform commitments related to the WHS/Grand Bargain around improving links between humanitarian and development assistance, multi-year funding and programming and the participation revolution?
2. Did such efforts improve or undermine the achievement of the response objectives in key priority areas?
3. What was new and different about the 2017 response, when compared to similar responses in previous years? What are some enduring gaps? To what extent did the response consider and respond to lessons identified from responses in 2011 (and to a lesser extent 2008)?
4. What immediate actions can be taken now to improve future responses to food insecurity in Somalia? What longer-term actions can be taken at a systemic level to improve responses to food insecurity in the future?

HPG will use a mixed methods approach to conduct this evaluation as follows:

### **Review of secondary analysis and data, including:**

- background material;
- meeting minutes, periodic reports and updates;
- studies commissioned in support of closely linked priorities;
- evaluations and perception surveys; and
- independent research related to the Grand Bargain, its workstreams, and related initiatives.

### **Survey (TBD):**

- time permitting, a survey of key response organisations and NGO consortium members.

### **Semi-structured interviews:**

- interviews with members of the Somalia NGO Consortium;
- interviews with senior officials and technical staff from other relevant humanitarian organisations and donors;
- interviews/FGDs with select members of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), ICCG and DOCC on the response itself any potential impact of the reforms at country level;
- interviews/FGDs with stakeholders at headquarters and country levels on key areas of GB implementation/progress to date; and
- FGDs with people suffering from food insecurity or displaced by the crisis and who received some form of aid in 2011 and 2017.

### *Deliverables*

The project will produce one final evidence-based report to the Somalia NGO Consortium. The final deliverable will also include an executive summary presenting key findings, recommendations and learning in accessible language and summary form.

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Cover photo: Girls line up at a feeding centre in Mogadishu, Somalia, in March 2017.

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