

# NEWS UPDATE

United Nations Development Programme

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**SOMALIA**

## **Sustainable Partnerships with the Somali Diaspora forged**

One of the success stories related to Somalis today is that of how effective the diaspora is in supporting relief and development activities in their country of origin. A study commissioned by UNDP on the role of the Diaspora in relief, development and peace-building examines the motivations for support, the factors that influence it, the means and mechanisms by which it is mobilized and transferred to the Somali regions, and the ways in which local Somali actors put the support they receive to use.

This report is based on research conducted in Somaliland, Puntland, South Central and a number of cities with a high concentration of Somalis in the diaspora.

At a validation session in Nairobi on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011 attended by over 100 participants from the Somali Diaspora – the US, Canada, the UK, the UAE, Denmark, Norway, New Zealand, Djibouti and Kenya, local Somali authorities and non-state actors, and the international community, UNDP Somalia Country Director, Alvaro Rodriguez acknowledged the important role of the diaspora in both the financial and social remittances.

“The Somali Diaspora has been a major contributor to the Somali economy and livelihoods through remittances, humanitarian assistance and participation in recovery and reconstruction efforts. Without this support, the Somali economy could have collapsed long ago,” said Mr. Rodriguez.

Remittance flows have been estimated at up to US\$ 1 billion in 2004 but could be as high as US\$ 700 million to Somaliland and US\$ 1.6 billion to the rest of Somalia, and representing some 23% of household income and 80% of the start-up capital for small and medium enterprises. However, the challenge remains to maintain positive interest and homeland ties among the Somali youth around the globe to continue engaging positively with their country of origin.

The team leader of the study, Laura Hammond, Senior Researcher, School of Oriental Studies (SOAS) presented the overall findings and recommendations, some of which include: the international community working with Diaspora “host” countries to facilitate an enabling environment for sending remittances and increasing access to travel; establishing two-way communication with the Diaspora, resulting in more effective partnerships; identifying specific areas of support to engage in and building on success stories; facilitating credit opportunities for local communities; encouraging organizations in Somalia to take up corporate social responsibilities; and supporting local administrations to create reliable Diaspora resource centers.

For more information and feedback on the report write to: [kaltun.hassan@undp.org](mailto:kaltun.hassan@undp.org) or [laura.hammond@soas.ac.uk](mailto:laura.hammond@soas.ac.uk)

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