As Somalia makes strides to overcome the ravages of conflict and rebuild a stable society, gender dynamics continue to play a critical role in achieving peace and development.

UNDP’s strategy in Somalia focuses on making progress towards peace and meeting people’s humanitarian and recovery needs by addressing gender issues, boosting access to social services, improving livelihoods, reducing poverty, promoting good governance and improving human security.

To ensure the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment in all development results, UNDP Somalia adopted a Gender Equality Strategy in 2012. The strategy served as a guide to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment considerations to all the CO's policies, operations and programmes through a two-track approach:

i) Specific interventions directly addressing gender imbalances in Somali society and responding to the acute challenges faced by Somali women;

ii) Gender mainstreaming across all other projects ensures the implications for women and men of any planned action, policy or programme at all levels are taken into consideration.

Three years into implementing the Gender Equality Strategy (2012 to 2014), UNDP Somalia has achieved some commendable results in promoting gender equality and empowering women through its programmes.

For example, in line with the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1820, UNDP helped improve access to justice for women through legal aid services, establishing sexual violence referral centers and mobile courts.

Draft sexual offences bills have been developed in all three regions of the country, awaiting passage. UNDP’s educational empowerment and advocacy efforts have facilitated a record increase in women's representation in the legal profession. The country programme’s effort have impacted on increasing women’s representation in the public sector (e.g. women’s employment as public prosecutors) and in decision-making (the parliament).

Specific livelihood interventions have expanded economic opportunities for women while at the same time addressing environmental concerns.

Going forward UNDP Somalia has revised its Gender Equality Strategy; building on its achievements, drawing on lessons learnt and aligning with the new development frameworks in Somalia. The country programme will continue to strengthen women’s participation in decision-making, peace building, civil service and public life at all levels; engage community structures to transform negative traditions which limit women’s and girls’ rights; address challenges of limited capacity and insecurity which adversely affect women’s ability to claim their rights; and leverage on partnerships built with ministries of government, other governing institutions and CSOs to promote legal and policy reforms that eliminate structural barriers to gender equality.

In 2013, UNDP Somalia undertook the UNDP Gender Equality Seal assessment. The Gender Seal is a corporate tool developed to track, measure and certify competence in gender mainstreaming and achievements in advancing women’s rights and corporate gender equality goals. Based on a review of their gender equality, accomplishments countries are certified at bronze, silver or gold levels. By the end of the assessment in 2014, UNDP Somalia achieved a ‘High Silver’ certification based on a final score of 78%, fulfilling 72 out of 92 benchmarks (one of the top 6 performing countries in the world). This was acknowledged as a significant improvement from a baseline of 57% in 2013. In making the certification, the Gender Seal Office noted that the Country Office clearly contributed to the national gender equality goals in Somalia. Observing that the Somalia government and civil society actors recognized the Country Office as a significant actor for gender equality in Somalia, UNDP Somalia was hailed as an example of how to integrate gender within internal policies and practices linked to programming under a crisis context.
Reconciliation, political development, security and stability will only progress when our daughters, sisters, wives and mothers are respected, involved, listened to and their rights protected by law. I urge Federal Government institutions to hasten the development of laws, policies and regulations that will ensure this comes to pass.

H.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, speaking at the celebration of International Women’s Day in Mogadishu, 8th March 2015

As a father of three girls, International Women’s Day is close to my heart. I want my daughters to grow up in a world where men and women have equal opportunities. This year’s theme ‘equality for women is progress for all’ couldn’t be more relevant to Somalia, a country where progress is what everybody is longing for. In order to achieve progress, let us champion women’s equality in Somalia by giving women a voice in politics, by empowering them so they can join the work force and contribute to the prosperity of their households and communities and by improving access to justice through a Sexual Offences Bill to better protect them from gender-based violence.

Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, former Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia speaking at the celebration of International Women’s Day in Mogadishu, 8th March 2015
GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW (GROL) PROGRAMME

Enhanced Capacity For Justice Sector Professionals To Address Gender Issues

- Justice actors across Somalia trained on court case management systems, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and judicial personnel security reaching 950 (188 women, 762 man) personnel;

- 140 Police Officers (22 women, 118 men) in Somaliland completed 45 days model police station training on management community policing, SGBV, basic investigation, prosecution, communication and human rights, and conflict resolution in addition to SGBV sensitization workshop for police station commanders aimed at enhancing the knowledge of police officers on how to provide assistance to women and children;

- Six women volunteers working as desk officers at the Model Police Station in Garow, prioritize special attention to Sexual and Gender Based Violence and other forms of harassment which has seen an increase in GBV reporting and prosecution (5,649 reported cases in Nugal, Banadir, Middle Shabbele and Lower Shabelle during July 2013 and June 2014). Increase of women lawyers from 1 in 2012 to 21 in 2014, following graduation of 4,513 women and 32 scholarship beneficiaries from Puntland state university;

- The 1 year judicial internship programme benefited 24 (7 women, 17 man) law graduates who were then appointed by the High Judicial Commission as judges and registrars in Somaliland.

Scholarship and graduate programmes provide foundation for future women leaders in police force and justice sectors:

- Across Somalia support was provided to 55 (20 women, 35 men) graduate interns in justice institutions and 149 (63 women, 86 men) scholarships for University legal studies as part of further strengthening the professionalization of the justice sector;

- In Puntland, 140 (40 women, 100 men) police officers trained on model police station management, community policing, SGBV, basic investigation, prosecution, communication and Human rights;

- In Somaliland, 30(10 women, 20 men) police officers gained degrees in criminology/science/public administration through UNDP Police Scholarship Programme and now recruited in Police Headquarters;

- 5 women officers benefited from a “Use of force” training focusing on Human Rights;

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN THE SECURITY AND JUSTICE SECTORS
• 30 investigators trained in investigation skills for SGBV cases, while 32 station managers were sensitized in their role in investigation and supervision of the SGBV cases;

• In 2014, 30 selected Police Officers (9 women, 21 men) in Somaliland commenced their two years Diploma and Degree scholarship program in University of Hargeisa on criminal studies, leadership, police procedures and law including HR aspect of it.

**Enhanced legal aid service provision to women promotes confidence in the formal justice system by women across Somalia**

• In 2014, 2 Sexual Assault referral centers (Baahikoob) established in regional Hospitals outside Hargeisa increasing the number of SGBV cases prosecuted & convicted from 205 in 2013 to 375 in 2014;

• 3 legal aid offices in Mogadishu supported with a total of 11 (6 women, 5 men) lawyers, 51 (43 women, 8 men) paralegals and 20 (10 women, 10 men) interns;

• 16 legal aid centres established across Somalia with a staffing of 256 personnel: 78 (24 women, 54 men) lawyers, 126 (71 women, 55 men) paralegals, 61 (25 women, 36 men) interns. A total of 980 SGBV cases reported in 2014 from 744 in 2013;

• Nationwide legal awareness campaigns facilitated by mobile courts and local non-government organizations reached 5,882 (3,040 women, 2,842 man) and 15,218 (10,564 women, 4,654 man) respectively.

**Enhanced security for women through community based rehabilitation and reconciliation interventions:**

• 500 youths (227 women, 273 men) benefitted from UNDP’s social rehabilitation and integration programmes for at risk youth and now directly engaged to support formal and informal peacebuilding processes in Somalia=

• In Puntland, 100 (40 women, 60 men) 2013 Youth for change beneficiaries were handed over to PREP for economic reintegration (business and vocational training);

• 50 Mentors (13 women, 37 men) engaged in support to the Y4C formal and informal peacebuilding processes where 229 women are among the 500 beneficiaries.
THE POVERTY REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENT (PREP) PROGRAMME

Alternative and renewable energy sources saving lives and costs

- Solar energy installed in main hospitals in Garowe, Galkayo, Baidoa and Burao districts in Puntland, provide alternative energy which serve at least 27,000 women annually saving lives in theatres and incubators;

- Sustainable alternatives to Charcoal Trade and Use through Vocational and skills training in appropriate technologies benefited 3,500 unemployed youth and women (2,000 women, 1,500 men) in charcoal value chain at federal level with 400 households in Galkayo provided with energy efficient stoves.

Increasing economic opportunities for women

- Livelihood interventions through cash for work in rehabilitation of infrastructures provided short and long term employment to both skilled and unskilled women across Somalia where 2218 (535 women, 1,683 men) benefitted;

- 204 women and 296 youth economically empowered in Eyl, Bander Bayle and Graa’d through social rehabilitation programme, skills training and provision of micro grants and start-up tools;

- In Puntland, out of the 500 graduates from Business Development Centers (BDCs) in Bossaso, Garowe and Galkayo 37% were women.

SOMALI WOMEN AND MEN BENEFIT FROM INCREASED SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPROVED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
Community-driven and Gender-sensitive approaches to HIV prevention and response increase awareness, reduce stigma and lead to reduction in HIV prevalence:

- Community Conversation on HIV is helping bridge the gap between health services (VCT, ART, PMTCT) and communities by encouraging more people to access services in order to reduce new infections as well as reduce stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV. 8,332 (6416 women, 1,916 men) have so far benefitted;

- The counselling support through ‘know your right’ training coupled with legal aid and Income Generating Activities (IGA) provision empowered 266 women and 102 men living with HIV in Somaliland to cope with the disease;

- A total of 1,836 HIV messages aired by Radio stations in Somalia address issues of HIV Basic Facts, promoting HIV services available at health facilities, as well as ART – life saving drugs available for people that are HIV positive;

- Training on Basic HIV & AIDS was conducted to 71 (23 women, 48 men) District Councils, Community Committees and Community Leaders in Berbera, Sheikh, Borama and Hargeisa who are now encouraged to attend the CC-CCE on HIV supporting the smooth implementation of the methodology.
THE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

Addressing social norms that reinforce gender inequality through community conversations:

The Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) through Community Conversations is a methodology applied to discuss and reflect on the prevailing gender issues. It is built on trust, accountability and participation. It is an approach aimed at creating interactive spaces for facilitated conversations, reflections and applications based on relationships of trust and mutual respect. Through the community conversations, communities’ understanding of gender issues in Somalia have been strengthened, creating an enabling environment at the community levels for addressing social norms that reinforce gender inequality.

- 51 (30 women, 21 men) CSO personnel and community actors trained and supported with grants to implement CCE-CC methodology in addressing gender issues in 6 communities (Sha’ab and Batalale villages in Berbera, Somaliland; Garowe and Galkayo, Puntland; Dollow district & Galgaduud region in South Central);
- A total of 8,950 people (5,376 women, 3,474 men) reached through CCE-CC sessions on Gender covering topics such as: women’s ability for leadership, the value of women’s education for the role of women in peace building, GBV and FGM.

Community outreach programmes create opportunities for inclusive engagement on gender issues:

- 65,000 people reached through radio talk shows on Gender issues (FGM, GBV and Women’s rights in Islam) in Galkacyo, Puntland;
- 4 inter-generational dialogue meetings and 4 speak out sessions on FGM reached 600 people (298 women, 302 men) in Hargeisa. The Intergenerational dialogues helped community youth committees, traditional and religious leaders and traditional birth attendants to explore FGM abandonment strategies. The speak-out sessions offered spaces for youth to engage and explore the root causes of gender-based violence in their communities and agree pragmatic actions that help prevent GBV;
- 30 youth peer educators were selected from the above three target IDPs with the help of community committees and enhanced their capacity through four days training on Gender, SGBV, peer level advocacy and community mobilization skills.
Supporting enabling legal and Policy environment for gender equality in Somalia:

- Gender policy adopted in Somaliland;
- FGM Policy adopted in Puntland;
- Draft sexual offences bill in all regions, awaiting enactment.

Leadership and public life skills building for women:

- 40 young women from Galgadud in the South central region benefitted from a year-long training and mentorship scheme on public life skills and now employed in diverse public and private sector organizations;
- 25 people (10 women Councilors and 15 women from CSOs and Government ministries) trained on Gender, Advocacy and leadership have established Somaliland Women Councilors Network and have nominated a secretary to coordinate;
- Leadership skills enhanced for 77 people (36 women, 41 men) from the government, civil society, and sectors such as media, education and health from all three Somali regions using the UNDP Transformational Leadership Development Programme (LDP) methodology. The training enhanced their capacity to respond to difficult social issues (including gender inequality) in Somalia. Breakthrough Initiatives carried out between the trainings by the participants of LDP reached 2,513 people.

Livelihood and economic empowerment opportunities increased for women:

- 60 FGM practitioners in Puntland empowered to venture into alternative livelihoods through trainings on business skills and grants provision ($300 each) for startups;
- 60 Somali women from indigent backgrounds in Puntland and Somaliland supported through a tertiary scholarship initiative to undertake university degrees in non-traditional career fields for women. The graduates are now key actors in Somali development; getting employed in the public sectors as lawyers, paralegals, prosecutors, econometricians, finance specialists and others;
- Study on women in the Somali Private sector exposed challenges to women in the private sector and creates foundation for policy and programming interventions.

Promoting women’s political participation:

- In Puntland the cabinet comprises of 46 members 5 being women increasing the number of women in Puntland to 10% from 8%;
- 25 people (10 women Councillors and 15 women from CSOs and government ministries) were provided a five days training on Gender, Advocacy and leadership and formed Somaliland Women Councillors Network 26 women in Galikayo are councilors at district level;
- National civic education and grass root forums on women’s political participation and provisional constitution reached 100 participants 55 women and 45 men to enhance women’s political participation, undertaking decision making and state formation at national level;
The gender seal assessment of the CO has seen a quantum leap in gender mainstreaming taking it beyond institutional measures into the zone of results and impacts

- Following two years of gender seal assessment, the CO was awarded honorable silver in 2014. With this ranking, the CO is among the top six performing UNDP country offices globally.

The CO culture of a flexible working arrangement is creating a happy medium between professional, personal demands and a business case to the organization

- The work-life policy developed and disseminated;
- At least 40% of staff took advantage of work/life balance policy options in 2014.

Gender equality agenda reinforced and affirmed through anti-harassment and non-discriminatory policies

- Procedures for confidentially in managing sexual harassment cases developed and disseminated;
- Posters with the message, ‘UNDP is harassment free zone’ produced and visibly placed in all CO locations.

Investing in staff capacity in promoting GEWE in a sustainable manner

- A Gender Mainstreaming training in 2012 for all programme staff countrywide enhanced the capacity of 68 (26 women, 42 men) staff members and enriched their knowledge on gender;
- A ‘Gender Mainstreaming Made Easy’ handbook for programme staff published in 2013, reinforced the learning acquired in 2012 and serves as practical tool for mainstreaming in day-to-day programme tasks;
- All-staff sensitization, refresher training for programme staff and customized training for operations staff conducted in 2014 reached 52 (17 women; 35men) programme staff and 82(36 women; 46 men) operations staffs helping to transform staff’s personal and professional outlook towards gender and deepen understanding of gender mainstreaming approaches in different areas of work;
- Specific training for the staff of the Resident Coordinator’s office (4 women, 1 man) opened discussions and action planning on the role of the Resident Coordinator’s office in mainstreaming gender into the UNCT’s agenda;

In Somaliland, a post-election study on women’s participation in the local council elections to inform the women’s political participation programmes was conducted leading to establishment of an advocacy group for the quota.

STRENGTHENING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN OPERATIONS: TOWARDS INCREASED INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENES
As a result of continuous capacity building and sensitization, CO staff are now taking personal initiatives promoting gender equality beyond their work including: developing stories and blogs to reflect their experiences in promoting gender at personal level and an innovative approach to mainstream gender into procurement processes led by the procurement unit. A recently launched staff survey indicated that 90% of the staff are very interested in gender issues and 80% believe that Gender mainstreaming is their responsibility.

**Gender-responsive public procurement; leveraging the potential of women-owned businesses and advocating for increased representation of women in the private sector**

At the business seminars held in November 2014 and November 2015 at the UNON premises in Nairobi, UNDP Somalia introduced the importance of incorporating gender into our business practices; i.e. ensuring that women have equal opportunities; are considered as part of the work force in traditionally male dominated sectors, receive equal pay for equal work; are given management responsibilities and become the focal points for managing contracts with the UNDP, thus building their knowledge and capacity in management. This has resulted successfully in women making up 25% of the work force in civil works projects with women receiving equal pay with men;

The CO now incorporates gender-specific questions into bidding processes with gender as an evaluation criteria has led to companies taking gender initiatives and considering more women for employment and advancement of women in their companies;

In the traditionally patriarchal society of Somalia, this sensitization is in the early stages, but UNDP’s procurement unit will continue to take every opportunity to build on our successes within the rules and regulations of UNDP procurement.