

# Strategy Paper

## **A Coordinated Approach for the Advancement of Child Rights in Somalia**



**Ministry of Women and  
Human Rights Development**  
*Federal Republic of Somalia*

## A Coordinated Approach for the Advancement of Child Rights in Somalia

Since ratification of the CRC in 2015, the FGS has made progress in developing, policies and strategies and legislation to enable realization of the rights of the child, including in education, health and child protection. Much work remains to be done to see measurable improvements in all rights of every child in Somalia. In this context, the MoWHRD believes this is the right moment for a joint decision on a coordinated, efficient and sustainable action by all actors in the area of the rights of the child, firstly in building the institutional framework for the realization of the rights of the child.

This paper is a reflection of strategic forward-thinking, planning and overall coordinating efforts by the whole government. The main aim of this paper is to explain the need for an improved institutional framework as requested in the CRC Committee's General Comment No. 5: General Measures of the Implementation (article 4 of the CRC) of the rights of the child. Only with such measures in place can quality and good practices for child rights programs be consistently and decisively applied across government and benefit CSO actors. The coordinated approach requires cooperation and support from UN and other international organizations that work with the Somali government in fulfilling its national and international Human Rights obligations.

### CRC implementation, reporting and lessons learned

In 2019 Somalia submitted to the CRC Committee in Geneva its Initial report on the implementation of the Treaty. As part of the CRC reporting process, Somalia has finalized its Replies to the CRC Committee's List of Issues and is about to submit that document. The Government of FGS, MoWHRD in the first place, is already preparing for the last phase in the reporting process – the dialogue with the CRC Committee in Geneva - and is looking forward to that important event and to the Concluding observations that will be adopted by the CRC Committee after the meeting. The next CRC report will most likely be due in 2025.

The CRC drafting process is valuable for the MoWHRD and representatives from the line ministries and CSOs that participated in the CRC drafting process. Their enhanced knowledge of the rights of the child and international procedure for the reporting on the CRC implementation, *added value and made strategic thinking possible*.

## MoWHRD's plans for 2021-2025

The CRC reporting process resulted in recognition of missing data, but also in recognition of the missing links – namely in realizing that general measures that must be taken so that rights of every child can start being realized. *No program, activity or field action can be sustainable and fully realized unless legislative and administrative measures, with a holistic approach, are in place.* Somalia is committed to collectively put together all necessary measures ensuring the realization of rights of all children with the perspective of leave no child behind. Therefore, and as a matter of urgency, the FGS will start strengthening existing and building new infrastructure to reduce risks, make children's rights a reality and create enabling protective environment.

In order to set in motion its vision, *the MoWHRD* (charged with rights of the child) *defined the most important points of its two -phase plan of action for the 2021-2025 period. This plan will be adjusted as the NPA is developed and will become a corner stone of the NPA:*



### PHASE ONE: 2021-2022

Immediate post initial CRC state report and Concluding observations activities; setting up of basic measures

- To undertake **urgent activities to develop a 5-year comprehensive and well-budgeted National plan of Action for children**, which will set out a framework, measures and obligations for gradual realization of the rights of the child. Such NPA will highlight areas, obligations, measures and particular tasks (based on indicators) in order to promote, develop and implement rights of the child, with a primary aim to prevent and redress violations of the rights of the child. The NPA development will start with a 3-months development of a Framework that will conclude by the end of 2020 and will continue in a process of broad public consultation that will lead to the adoption of the NPA. Given the circumstances of a smooth process and broad engagement of all stakeholders, including children, the NPA will be ready for endorsement by the Government by the end of 2021. The MoWHRD already initiated discussions and activities in preparation for the NPA Framework in August 2020.
- The NPA Framework will draw a map for the activities; provide proposals for the contents-the tasks; designate roles and set up a timeline;

- To establish within the MoWHRD a **standing Core group (unit/department) for the child rights coordination, monitoring and reporting (CRC and other procedures, such as other TBs and UPR)**, which will, as priority:
  - *Continue building stronger knowledge and capacity* and get acquainted, learn about new, existing materials/tools: material for understanding and protecting the rights of the child, implementation and monitoring and embark on a compilation of international standards on children such as: training manuals, checklist, guidelines, tools for specific right, compilation of the Committee of the Rights of the Child's General Comments etc.
  - *Organize a broad public consultation on the CRC Committee's Concluding observations (COBs)*, and encourage children, media and professionals to participate in developing a map of implementation of the COBs.



#### **PHASE TWO: 2022-2024**

**Continue setting up and reforming institutional structures and undertaking activities to enable continuous implementation of the rights of the child**

- **Building structures and effective systems**
  - To pursue broader child rights training and education activities
  - To establish a national child rights protection Information management system (CPIMS).
  - To initiate discussion on the *establishment of an independent Child rights institution.*

- **Undertaking activities to enable continuous improvement in realization of the rights of the child**
  - To undertake a *study on legal compliance of the national laws with the CRC*. Examples of such studies are available and have been supported mainly by UNICEF in many CRC State parties.
  - To further *advocate for adoption of the Child Rights Bill*.
  - *To ratify international treaties that are important for children and to review reservations*
  - To consider *supporting the integration of child rights learning modules in the official curriculum* of primary and secondary education as well higher education such as university programs, including Master level.
  - To *support work of CSOs that* strategically work in the area of the rights of the child.
  - To *use all influence to bring child rights issues to a high political level and raise awareness and commitment*. To consider working with parliamentarians individually or through traditional chiefs/elders.
  - To *support on-going research and data collection, including statistics* in the area of the rights of the child.
  - To *provide an environment for accelerated discussion on the child's access to justice*.
  - To *coordinate listed activities with UNICEF and the international community in Somalia and seek technical cooperation*.

## Coordinating activities with UNICEF and other stakeholders

The FGS needs international support and a coordinated approach so that such plans can be realized. *Since the first and the most important step in the plan is the development of a comprehensive five year National Plan of Action for children (NPA)* by the end of 2020 a Framework for the National Plan of Action (NPAF) for children, the MoWHRD notes with appreciation that this perfectly coincides with UNICEF's planning and the 2021-2025 Country Programme Document (CPD).

In its 2021-2025 CPD, building on the progress made, results achieved, and lessons learned from the current and previous country programmes, UNICEF commits to making a strong contribution to addressing children's rights in the country. The priorities outlined in the UNICEF CPD are to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); implementation of the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (when adopted) and of relevant recommendations from the 2016 Universal Periodic Review; Goals of the National Development Plan (NDP9) for 2020-2024; the United Nations Sustainable Development Coordination Framework (UNSDCF) for Somalia 2021-2025 (Outcome 2); along with Goal 3 of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021.



**Ministry of Women and  
Human Rights Development**  
*Federal Republic of Somalia*