

Collective approaches for durable solutions in Somalia: Steps to increasing coherence between resilience, durable solutions and Somali-led processes

Key Points

- There is increasing recognition of the importance of integrating resilience, durable solutions and Somali-led processes, but experience of how to do this is limited.
- Greater attention to the needs, vulnerabilities, capacities and rights of displacement affected communities in urban centres in Somalia is critical to a more integrated approach.
- Issues such as housing, property and residence rights; and safety, security and protection concerns are important to this agenda, and require more detailed analysis and engagement.
- International organisations have expressed support for Somali-led approaches and localisation, but more efforts are required to agree specific objectives in Somalia and to give effect to current commitments.
- Agreeing collective approaches takes time and requires new, collaborative ways of working. Donors need to allow for longer inception phases to facilitate this.

Introduction

Despite increasing recognition of the strategic linkages between resilience and durable solutions, there is limited experience and understanding of how to link these in practice in Somalia. In many instances, different parts of the same organisations have been engaged

in resilience and durable solutions work, but have pursued these separately. The agendas share many strategic issues and challenges, but possible solutions and learning are not sought collectively. These issues include:

- How to ensure work is more Somali-led and owned, and how to increase ownership progressively?
- How to work effectively with, and across, rural and urban populations, and take account of mobility across different locations?
- How to target appropriately in a context of high levels of exclusion and marginalisation?
- How to ensure more collaborative approaches and multi-stakeholder engagement across development, humanitarian, governance and political actors?
- How to increase evidence-based programming through collective data and information management, and to increase collective learning?

Challenges to working collectively

A number of institutional and cultural barriers to increasing coherence between resilience, durable solutions, and Somali-led processes were identified:

- *Financing*: there is significant underfunding of projects that respond to Somali displacement which results in a competition between actors for financing.

- *Competition*: each agency wants to position and profile itself and its work, resulting in limited cooperation, collaboration, and transparency between organisations.
- *Resistance to change*: organisations and individuals tend to think in individual silos and sectors. It is often difficult and time-consuming to adopt new approaches. Organisations are slow to adopt true Somali-led approaches.
- *Language barriers*: a lack of common terminology makes it difficult for actors to engage with each other as well as to agree and monitor strategies. There is no agreed definition of resilience and the term ‘Somali-led approaches’ means different things to different people.
- *Broad and complex agenda*: combining resilience and durable solutions is conceptually challenging and a complex, vast agenda.

Moving towards greater coherence

Durable solutions approaches are focused on displacement affected communities (DACs) which include: host communities, internally displaced persons (IDPs), irregular migrants, refugees, and returnees. The impact of displacement on host communities is particularly important in Somalia because displaced people are often hosted in underserved and marginalized areas where absorption capacity can be limited. A durable solution process is achieved when displaced people no longer have specific assistance and protection needs linked to their displacement and can exercise their rights without discrimination resulting from their displacement.

Durable solutions are a process aimed at securing (re)integration for displaced people, with the following three principles at its centre:

1. Voluntariness
 - a. Freedom of movement
 - b. Prohibition of forced return
 - c. Informed decision making

2. Safety
 - a. Physical safety
 - b. Material safety
 - c. Legal safety
3. Dignity
 - a. No unconditional return
 - b. Return or resettlement should be at a displaced person’s own pace
 - c. No manipulation
 - d. No separation of families

Similar to resilience approaches, durable solutions place both the individual and the community at the centre of the process. Put simply, resilience building and protection constitute durable solutions. Durable solutions frameworks incorporate many aspects important to resilience:

- Social cohesion
- Access to basic services
- Access to economic opportunities and jobs
- Participation in public affairs

Resilience is a much contested and debated term and approach. One commonly used definition provided by DfID is “the ability of countries, communities and households to manage change, by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks or stresses - such as earthquakes, drought or violent conflict – without compromising their long-term prospects.”

In addition to different programmatic areas, resilience and durable solutions share many common approaches. Resilience, like durable solutions, is about ‘how you do it, rather than what you do’. Like durable solutions, resilience is increasingly moving towards multi-dimensional and multi-level approaches which looks beyond simplistic ‘cause and effect’ models, and works with both development and humanitarian actors. Similarly, both resilience and durable solutions are concerned with long-term outcomes and sustainability.

The 2011 famine in Somalia prompted a move towards resilience due to the recognition that traditional humanitarian action was insufficient. However, current acute levels of malnutrition amongst IDPs in urban centres suggest insufficient attention to displacement affected populations. Could greater collective action improve outcomes?

There has been a move towards **localisation** in Somalia in recent years, however more work needs to be done to increase this. A single definition or approach to localisation doesn't exist. It requires moving beyond tactical leadership to more strategic leadership and considering what types of organisations, leaderships and structures facilitates greater ownership by Somalis. Current tactical approaches incentivise short-term funding and programmes, which undermine localisation. Of the \$1.3 billion of funding currently assigned to support communities affected by the humanitarian crisis, only 0.86% goes to local organisations directly. This is vastly below the global target of at least 25% of available funding to be channelled directly through national partners.

Participants noted that it was important to not just focus on the 25% funding target as a numerical goal, but also to increase the range of support to Somali organisations. Currently funding is rarely provided for core funding and capacity development of Somali organisations, in contrast to both international organisations and the private sector which regularly train their staff. Given that Somali organisations have been on the front-line of humanitarian action for the past 25 years, there is clearly a problem with the system if capacity remains an issue.

Principles of working

A set of principles of working were developed collectively which can help foster coherence

between resilience, durable solutions and Somali-led processes.

- To put displacement affected communities at the centre of programming efforts.
- Work within the Somali National Development Plan so that government engagement and agreed policies are at the heart of collective action.
- Integrated approaches take time – donors should have longer inception phases to facilitate integrated working.
- Develop participatory approaches that do not discriminate between different people (host, IDPs, returnees) and which continue throughout the life of programmes.
- Develop area-based approaches for planning and coordination which recognise the importance of the specific context and which build upon pre-existing coordination networks as well as lessons on what is not currently working and why.
- Donors to support capacity development for local actors which can enhance and facilitate local leadership. While these issues are mutually reinforcing, it is also important to acknowledge that their relationship is not linear and Somali leadership should not be tied to, or contingent on, capacity development.

Issues central to this collective agenda

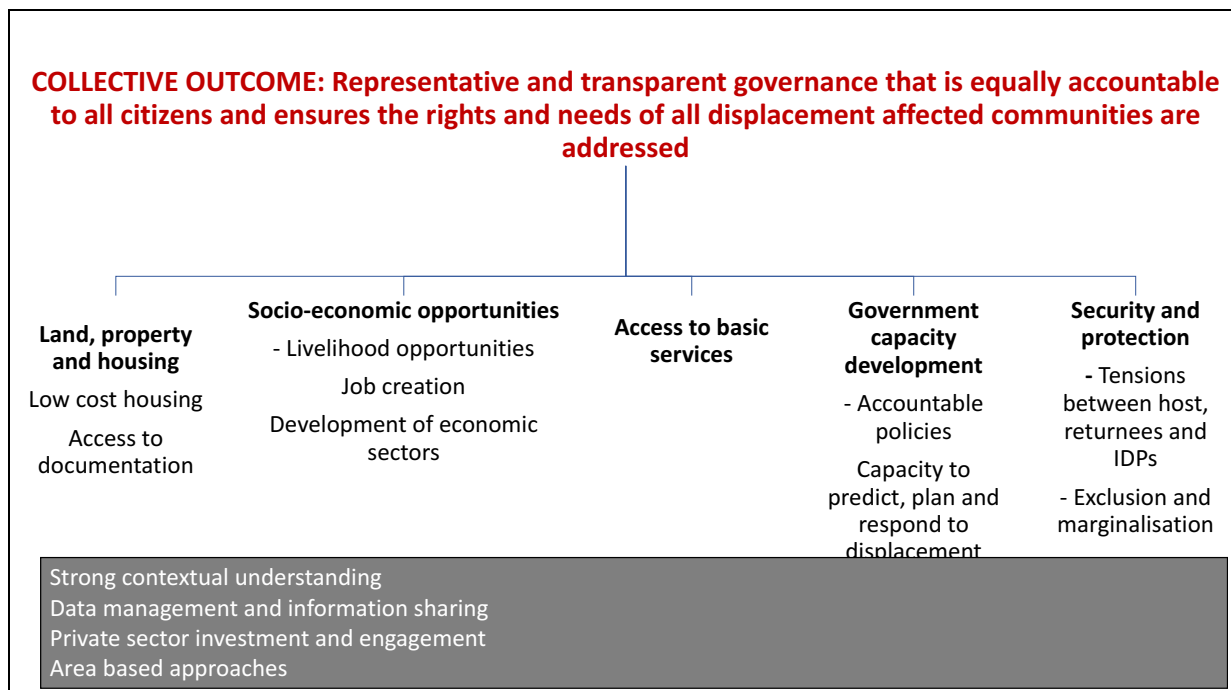
Three themes emerged repeatedly as central to collective approaches to durable solutions and which require greater attention and analysis:

- Localisation, capacity building, and capacity development.
- Safety, security, and protection.
- Housing, land, property and residence.

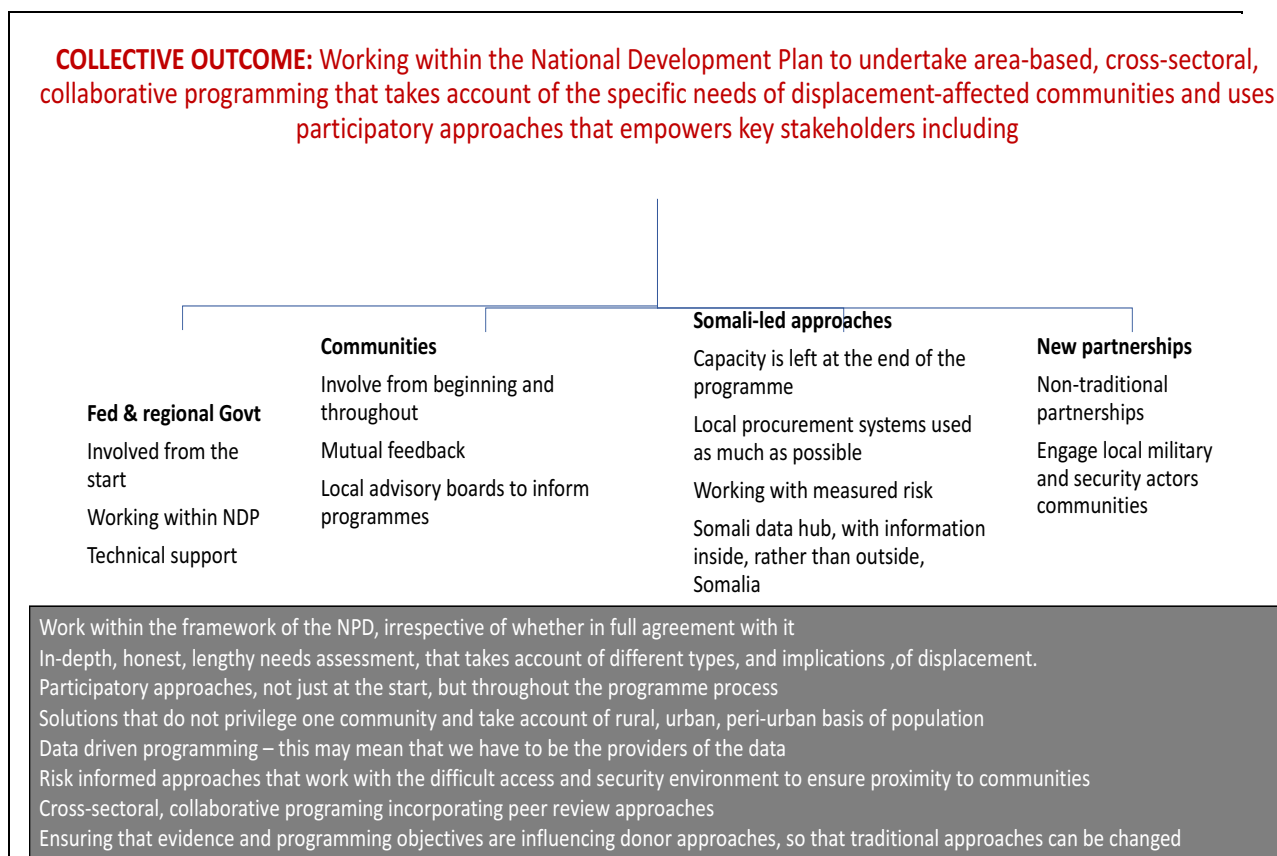
Collective strategies for greater coherence

Groups were assigned the task of developing a three-year, multi-actor strategy, to address the situation of people in urban settings in Somalia. The following is a summary of the strategies.

Collective strategy for policy makers



Collective strategy for programming



Commitments

A series of **collective commitments** were proposed:

- To continue the current dialogue and discussion on collective approaches and to try and ensure that the same participants attended each time to help foster a common vision and framework.
- To focus on the specific themes identified.
- To expand the number and profile of organisations involved, including security and conflict prevention organisations.
- To seek ways to have these discussions in Somalia.

The following **commitments were made by individual organisations**:

Centre for Humanitarian Change: will take the principles of working to DfID for integration into their funding strategy on resilience. Commitment to further engagement on the issues discussed in this workshop and ensure that the agenda is more widely profiled.

Danish Refugee Council: to encourage increased knowledge sharing. They are also working to develop referral pathways and will work to develop resilience with other actors to ensure increased coordination. DRC will integrate the strategy developed at the workshop into its findings for its assessment of Baidoa.

Department for International Development: committed to further the debate on localisation. Also commit to being a disruptor in the system so that more innovative solutions can be found.

InterSOS: committed to integrating resilience, durable solutions, and localisation approaches into its three-year global strategy, and its regional strategy in East Africa and Yemen.

Somali NGO Consortium: to continue to be a convenor of these workshops and to foster more dialogue. Also commit to conducting research into capacity building to help increase funding to Somali NGOs and to be a proponent of the increased integration of Somali NGOS into discussion structures at all levels.

World Food Programme: will integrate resilience and durable solution elements into its new strategy and will work to further its commitment to capacity building for its local partners.

Norwegian Refugee Council: commit to looking into how resilience and durable solutions can be integrated together with local programming. To re-examine social cohesion and to check if any inclusion or exclusion factors have been missed. To look at how to enhance local governance and increase coordination with more local actors.

Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development: will take activities from the conference and apply them to their new country and regional strategies. Will aim to ensure that future programming places resilience and durable solutions at its centre.

Somalia Resilience Action Consortium: invite participants to an event on 15 December 2017 they are hosting on the effects of sequential shocks on resilience where they will exhibit a new simulation model.

CARE: to create forums for IDPS, host communities, and local municipalities and ministries to increase access of displacement affected communities to government.

Save Somali Women and Children: to support vulnerable women, provide them protection and help them claim their dignity.

International Rescue Committee: to continue to invest in conversations on these issues forward.

Durable Solutions Initiative: to help facilitate access to Professor Walter Kalin for all actors including local NGOs. Additionally they commit to increase ownership of the operating principles and to formally endorse and distribute them and to put them into action.

CREDO: to do a self-assessment as an organisation and as an operational actor to help develop capacity building into all of their projects.

CONCERN: to get partners involved in a variety of planning activities. To commit to improve knowledge sharing.

RVI: there will be video-conferencing facilities for use in the next workshop to facilitate greater participation from Somali organisations (if the next workshop is not held in Somalia).

Somalia National NGO Forum: are committed to pushing the government to pass the proposed NGO Act. Furthermore, they committed towards increasing coordination with and engaging with the Somali government.