Somalia SDG 16 Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force Launch

Thursday 27 September 2018, 08.30-11.00, Helmsley Building, 230 Park Avenue

Background

Achieving sustainable development in Somalia requires investment in peace, justice and strong institutions (**SDG 16**). SDG 16—'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'—is the foundation for development. Without peace, or institutions that are capable of delivering services—including justice and security—to all, many Somalis cannot realise their potential contribution to the economic, social, and cultural wealth of their societies.

There is an opportunity now to make real progress on SDG 16 in Somalia. Over two decades of civil war in Somalia led to a security vacuum and total absence of government institutions, forcing most Somalis to rely on local security arrangements and the traditional justice system. Efforts to restore a central authority are making substantial progress: recent successes include the swearing in of the first formal parliament in more than 20 years; holding of the first presidential election since 1967; key advances against Al-Shabab militants; and the inauguration of the Federal Government of Somalia. The Federal Government—with substantial support and investment from the United Nations and other international actors—is now restoring rule of law institutions throughout Somalia.

However, the international system lacks the evidence-base needed to be effective, or to be accountable to the people of Somalia or donor governments for the impact of their investments. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) efforts—in Somalia and conflict-affected contexts globally[1]—typically obtain information about output-level achievements: e.g. number of workshops held, research reports written, vehicles purchased, personnel trained. Yet the information that the Somali Government and its supporters care about concerns outcome-level changes in, for example, overall levels of victimization, impunity, legal awareness, social cohesion and trust in institutions. Are lives changing as a result of international peace support, and if so: how? where? as a result of what interventions? In the absence of a system to collect, collate, and communicate this information, there is no way to know whether investments in SDG 16 are properly targeted or effectual. The international system therefore lacks the evidence-base needed to be effective, or accountable to the people of Somalia or donor governments for the impact of their investments.[2] Lkewise, the Somali Government is unable to measure long term progress or determine its priorities based on solid data to coordinate international support.

Good news: The United Nations in Somalia is breaking new ground in peacebuilding. The UN Global Focal Point (GFP) arrangement[3] in Somalia unites UN entities supporting police, justice and corrections institutions. This joint arrangement creates a platform for UN entities to establish a single M&E system that collates all existing (output level) data streams and produces the additional information needed to ascertain the overall, macro ('outcome')-level impact of international investments in peace, justice and inclusion in Somalia.[4]

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[1] No g7+ country has a system to measure the overall impact of international investments in SDG 16.

[2] UN missions mandated by the UN Security Council operate mostly against a one-year mandate (even though the lifespan of a mission may reach on average 8-10 years); numerous UN and international actors each have separate M&E processes for relatively small amounts of money; there is no system to draw together the data collected by numerous justice and security institutions, or procedures to ensure that they meet data standards and can be safely and effectively transferred for reporting purposes; much of the technology and expertise needed for this system to achieve its potential impact exists in the private sector and academic entities: predictive analytics (AI), blockchain, data visualization and analysis tools; satellite and market research data; expertise on data security, data privacy, database development, survey development, data codification, and data on issues concerning violent incidents, corruption, illicit arms flows, etc.

[3] The UN Global Focal Point (GFP) arrangements creates a platform for entities to work more effectively on rule of law. United within the GFP arrangement, UN entities and their donors can combine their resources to address the significant rule of law-related challenges that lie beyond the scope of small-scale projects supported by individual donors and implemented by individual entities working in isolation. The possibility now exists for the GFP in Somalia to break new ground in peacekeeping by establishing a single M&E system that collates all existing (output level) data streams and produces the additional information needed to ascertain the overall, macro ('outcome')-level impact of international investments in peace, justice and inclusion in Somalia.

[4] The GFP arrangement has recently undergone a review. The review recommends that monitoring and evaluation efforts be strengthened so that impact and results can be measured, and support provided under the GFP arrangement is more efficient and effective.

Together, the Government of Somalia, United Nations in Somalia, and the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies[5] are building a 'world first' joint system to measure peace, justice and inclusion: an innovation which is already inspiring a change in peacekeeping practice globally.[6] This system can give Somali communities the opportunity to orient international investements in the rule of law, by helping to set objectives, monitor and report progress against them. It will provide up-to-date and instant information on the status of peace and security in targeted districts, serving also as an early warning system which enables local and international actors to better respond to shocks and address negative or unintended consequences of initiatives undertaken to restore the rule of law. UNDP is hosting the M&E system, in order to ensure neutrality and sustainability, and that the effort is connected to SDG 16 indicators. The system is being developed in partnership with national authorities including the Ministry of Planning, in order to build the capacity of the host government to take over the monitoring to feed into their SDG reporting.

This innovative M&E system is intended to improve the impact and accountability of international investment in SDG 16, and enable Somalis to take ownership of it by helping to set, monitor, achieve and report progress in their own peace and development objectives over time. The system developed in Somalia will provide a model which can change rule of law practice globally: demonstrating how to measure the impact of investment, and create the evidence-base to ensure that every dollar is allocated, via data-driven and nationally-owned decision-making, to achieve meaningful change for the world's poorest people—change that they define and verify.

Rationale: A project is being set-up to design and develop this ground-breaking system. The project is supported by the Somalia Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Task Force, composed of experts and institutions with relevant expertise, data, and technology.[7] The tri-sectoral (government-civil society-private sector) Task Force is a new joint United Nations working group between the Somalia United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office, Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), United Nations Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), and the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies.

Purpose and objectives: This meeting will serve as the *formal launch of the Somali M&E peace and security project and first meeting* of the Somalia Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force. It will achieve these objectives:

- Government of Somalia formally launches the Project and the Task Force.
- United Nations welcomes Task Force, and thanks Members for helping to strengthen peacebuilding.
- Global Alliance outlines its commitment to the Task Force, and promoting its broader impact.
- Task Force members are introduced, and get to know the team and process underway in Somalia.
- Task Force members advise on specific queries from Government of Somalia.
- Task Force members review Terms of Reference and outline key objectives.

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[5] The Global Alliance can unite the Member States, civil society, and businesses with the expertise, technology and data needed to support the development of this system. Specifically, the Global Alliance is helping to: 1) Mobilise international actors which can 'feed' data into this new M&E system and support Somali communities—especially the most excluded—to set and monitor achievement of progress towards SDG 16. 2) Bring together relevant private sector technology, civil society expertise, and experience from other conflict-affected countries with experience in measuring SDG 16, and improvements in the institutional functioning that underpin sustainable improvements in peace and security.

[6] The UN in South Sudan and Lebanon have already expressed an interest in building similar systems.

[7] The Task Force enables interested persons and institutions with relevant expertise and capacities to promote the success of the Somalia M&E system providing (Mogadishu-based) staff with expert advice and other support in line with their experience and capabilities. The Task Force will thus leverage the collective intelligence and capabilities of people and institutions with specialized expertise, data and technology to guide and support this ground-breaking initiative. Please see annex Terms of Reference for more information about the role of the Task Force and the responsibilities of its members. The establishment of the Task Force follows an initial exploratory meeting during UN Rule of Law Week (16th June 2018), it was decided to launch a Somalia Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force to enable interested persons and institutions with relevant expertise and capacities to promote the success of the Somalia M&E system providing (Mogadishu-based) staff with expert advice and other support in line with their experience and capabilities.