

**Common Charter of Demands by Women's Groups in Somalia for  
Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women  
in the Drought Impact Needs Assessment and Recovery and Resilience Framework**

**Our Deepest Sympathy:**

We, women's groups & organizations from Somalia offer our sincerest condolences over the tragedies related to the ongoing drought. We are deeply saddened by the loss of life and the extensive damage suffered and remain concerned for the welfare of those who are affected. We stand ready to extend our support to the people and women of Somalia.

- IIDA Women's Organization
- Women Pioneers for Peace and Life (HINNA)
- Women in Action Against Malnutrition (WAANO)
- Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC)
- Humanitarian Integrity for Women Action (HIWA)
- Organization for Somali Protection and Development (OSPAD)
- Relief and Development Initiative Organization (WARDI)
- Somali Community Concern (SCC)
- TAQWO Women, Family and Child Development Organization (TAQWO)

Somali women continue to bear the brunt of the ongoing drought. Despite vulnerabilities resulting from displacement, loss of livelihoods and malnutrition, Somali women and women's groups play important leadership roles in responding to the drought and in the transition to recovery. Recovery efforts must be gender-sensitive and address women's practical and strategic needs. Understanding gender differences, inequalities and capacities will improve the effectiveness of our humanitarian response and recovery efforts. We must work together to promote and achieve gender equality — this is a shared responsibility of all humanitarian actors. Therefore, we are demanding women's participation and representation as well as affirmative actions during the response, early recovery and rehabilitation efforts, including in the planning, policy development, resource allocation, budgeting and monitoring processes. The recovery process should equally focus on women IDPs, returnees and "stayees", with urgent emphasis on the rural sector.

**1. Women's participation and leadership**

- Government, the United Nations, civil society and aid coordination mechanisms should enable a formal, meaningful, consultative forum with women's groups and networks to identify, address and monitor the needs and capacities of women, girls, men and boys.
- Appropriate funds need to be allocated to women's groups and CSOs who are already working with affected communities and have the context-specific knowledge on the distinct needs, priorities and capacities of women, girls, men and boys.
- Women must have access to relevant, consistent and timely information to make informed decisions regarding early recovery and rehabilitation processes and phases.
- Women need to be involved in all stages of project and program design and implementation at the national, regional and local levels in camps, host communities and areas of return and stayees. In particular, women and girls need to be part of all local project committees so that their voices are integrated and their needs properly addressed. We ask that monitoring mechanism be established to uphold gender accountability.

- Women's equal participation in community managed disaster risk reduction and early warning systems is essential.

## **2. Food security, WASH, health and sustainable livelihoods**

- All needs assessments must consult with women and men of all ages and collect data disaggregated by sex, age and other vulnerabilities (e.g female-headed households, widows, divorced, women with disabilities, older women and adolescent girls).
- Women's access to sustainable livelihoods opportunities must be strengthened. This entails strengthening the capacity of women's associations and women entrepreneurs, removing investment barriers and creating equal opportunities for women's entrepreneurship and decent employment.

## **3. Prevention of violence against women and girls**

- Immediate action needs to be taken to address all forms of gender-based and sexual violence. Relevant stakeholders must take special action to protect at-risk groups, including married women at risk of domestic violence, female heads of households, adolescent girls, divorced women and widows.
- Awareness must be raised on women's rights and available services and recourse mechanisms through women's organizations and media campaigns. This information needs to be made available at police, justice, health, religious and education facilities.
- The number of women police personnel needs to be increased and they should be trained in SGBV so that survivors can receive adequate protection services. There is urgent need for police units with special training on SGBV and special protection training within IDP camps.
- Access needs to be provided to legal aid services and psycho-social support with special emphasis on survivor's protection.
- Women safety audits need to be conducted to increase women's and girl's safety within cities, public spaces and residences within IDP camps where SGBV frequently occurs. Adapted local plans need to be developed during the early recovery and rehabilitation phases.
- Humanitarian operations and early recovery efforts need to take into account the key aspects of sexual and reproductive health. Targeted support for displaced and vulnerable pregnant and lactating mothers and vulnerable groups such as survivors of SGBV and female genital mutilation must be provided.
- Hygienically safe solar-lid latrines for women and girls need to be made available close to their residences.

## **4. Women-focused targeted programs as an affirmative action**

- Women, particularly heads of households, urgently need to receive access to income generating and livelihood opportunities, including cash-for-work opportunities, livelihood assets distributions, skills development and training.
- Access to effective services and protection mechanisms must be ensured through establishing multi-purpose women centers in camps, host communities, areas of returnees and stayees. These centers need to provide women with access to information, SGBV support and referral services, cash-for-work and skills development, as well as psycho-social support services.
- Capacity building for women and women's organizations needs to be provided on early warning and disaster risk reduction. Women need to be fully involved in the development of response plans.
- Protection services are urgently required for women's access and ownership of land and property.
- Dignity kits for menstrual periods and GBV, and clean delivery kits as well as solar lighting need to be made available and accessible for all women, especially in the most remote and vulnerable areas. All kits need to be accompanied by simple and ideally graphic instructions of use.

- Awareness must be raised on nutrition. Women farmers urgently require technical training on food conservation to prevent loss of food and, as a consequence, famine.
- Education for girls must be a priority during the recovery process as an immediate need, also to prevent further drop outs. These efforts need to be linked to long term development programs.
- Urgent emphasis should be placed on preventing new displacements by enabling women “stayees” to obtain alternative livelihood and income-generating activities.

#### **5. Gender mainstreaming**

- More women technical experts need to be formed and deployed. Dedicated gender capacity should be established within Ministries and Departments responsible for the recovery process, especially the Ministries of Agriculture, Finance, Planning and Humanitarian Affairs. This entails targeted capacity development on gender mainstreaming.
- Systematic coordination needs to be ensured with national and local women’s groups and networks at all stages of relief and recovery efforts.
- Gender sensitive guidelines and advocacy briefs should be developed and issued for the relief and recovery phases.
- Separate gender needs assessments should be conducted to guide the decision-making process and strategy of early recovery and rehabilitation efforts and programming.
- The Drought Impact Need Assessment (DINA) Gender Chapter findings and recommendations need to be fully integrated and used for the Recovery and Resilience Framework (RRF) program activities and resulting budget allocation.