

# UN-HABITAT in the Somali Region

25 years of partnership in urban development



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### **Foreword**

Over the last 25 years, Somali towns have experienced unprecedented urban growth, amid a chronic conflict and recurring natural disasters. Somali culture is traditionally nomadic, especially in the north. However, conflict, drought and limited potential for natural resources development in rural areas have urged a large part of the population to migrate to urban centres. The result is the litany of urban woes found the world over: burgeoning informal settlements, weak institutional structures. inadequate legal frameworks, poor planning, insufficient coverage and quality of basic services, limited economic opportunities, and poverty. These realities are exacerbated throughout the Somali region by political and clan-based tensions and the ever-present threat of violence. This is particularly the case in the major urban centres of south central Somalia: in the latter half of 2007, over 400,000 people fled Mogadishu following renewed armed conflict.

UN-HABITAT programmes over the years reflect these shifts in the Somali urban context. While early interventions in the 1980s consisted of small projects that supported nomadic settlements, UN-HABITAT currently leads a countrywide urban development programme, founded on the experiences and lessons learned over two and a half decades, and fully adapted to the fast-changing Somali context.

The first involvements after the war – in nascent Somaliland in the mid-1990s – were focused on building the capacity of re-emerging local authorities struggling to operate in a fragile post-conflict situation. Building technical and administrative capacities was crucial, particularly in water provision and financial operations.



Training components were combined with tangible reconstruction projects to address immediate infrastructure needs and maximize the impact of UN-HABITAT's urban interventions. Subsequent programmes sought to make solid contributions in the specific areas of urban governance and urban management. Capacity-building activities, such as the Good Local Governance and Leadership Training Programme, extended from the northwest into Puntland and the south central region.

With the creation of the holistic Urban Development Programme for the Somali region (SUDP) in 2005, all ongoing and planned urban activities were merged under an all-encompassing umbrella framework. Even though many of the existing project components and areas of intervention remained unaltered, the field experience and the specializations of the various implementing partners gave additional depth to the programme. In addition, an increased variety of donors provided opportunities to focus on new activities, including projects that provided direct assistance

to vulnerable populations including displaced persons, returnees, the urban poor, and other communities affected by conflict and disaster.

The consolidation of projects brought enhanced efficiency and effectiveness, a trend that continues through the broader context of United Nations Country Programme reform and increased emphasis on joint programming. UN-HABITAT has over the years taken on an important role helping humanitarian agencies to bridge emergency response with early recovery and more durable solutions for sustainable development.

This publication seeks to provide an overview of UN-HABITAT's involvement in the Somali region over the last 25 years, particularly from the mid-1990s into the new century. While it is essentially presented as a chronological, project-centric study, the document also elucidates the unique UN-HABITAT vision and approach. I would like to thank the SUDP team and the numerous authors whose original reports, briefs, and articles from over the years were used as the basis for this document.

Anna Tibaijuka

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director, UN-HABITAT

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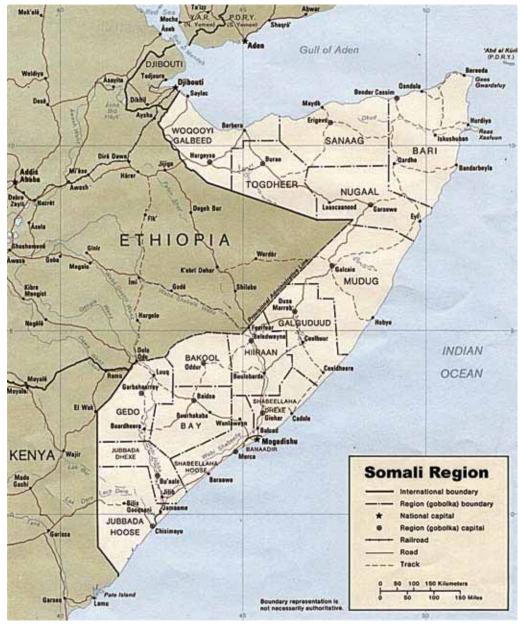


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## UN-HABITAT Projects in the Somali Region (1981–2008)

- 1. Appropriate Technology Development for Nomad Settlements (1981)
- 2. Infrastructure Development (1981)
- 3. Pilot Development of Low-cost Housing (1984)
- 4. Low-cost Housing Development (1987)
- 5. Urban Settlements Governance and Management Programme (1995–2000)
- 6. Berbera Technical and Institutional Assistance Project (1999–2003)
- 7. Sheikh Water Supply Project (1999)
- 8. Burao Water Supply Project (2000–2004)
- 9. Rehabilitation of the Hargeisa Water Production System (2000–2002)
- 10. Kossar-Burao Water Development Project (2002)
- 11. Somali Urban Sector Profile Study (2002)
- 12. Identification and Development of Human Settlements Activities to Support the Reintegration of Returning Refugees (2002)
- 13. Good Local Governance and Leadership Training Programme or GLTP (2003–2005)
- 14. Support to Priority Areas in the Urban Sector Programme or SPAUS (2004–2006)
- 15. Urban Development Programme for the Somali Region or SUDP (2005–2008)
- 16. Assistance to Internally Displaced People and Returnees in Hargeisa and Garowe (2005–2007)
- 17. Reconstruction of Tsunami-damaged Xaafuun Town (2005–2007)
- 18. Training for Internally Displaced People in Garowe (2006)
- 19. Strengthening Governance in the Somali Region (2006–2007)

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