

# TEN YEARS OF SOMALI PEACE-MAKING IN DIASPORA

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PEACE-MAKING IN DIASPORA

THE STORY OF SOMALI INITIATIVE FOR DIALOGUE  
AND DEMOCRACY (SIDD)

COMPILED AND EDITED BY  
DR AHMED SHARIF ABBAS, PhD AND PETER RIDDELL

Photo on front cover: HE Mohamed Sahnoun, former UN Special Envoy to Somalia, hosted by SIDD on 4th May 2007

Sincere thanks to Jim Baynard-Smith and Don de Silva for their edits and proof-reading of this document.

First published 2017  
by SOMALI INITIATIVE FOR DIALOGUE AND DEMOCRACY

Book design: Blair Cummock  
Printed by Biddles.co.uk, King's Lynn, UK

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# Foreword

We are pleased to introduce this publication to mark the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD).

To realise its full value, we need to examine the context within which it is written.

Somalia was created in 1960 from a former British protectorate and an Italian colony, and was a sovereign, and democratic republic, founded on inclusive representation of the people, a multiparty system and social justice.

But two decades of civil war from 1991 have caused untold misery, hardship and suffering to our people. Clan-based conflicts and secessionist efforts have decimated our once proud land. Many have died and many others have fled to safe havens throughout the world.

The conflicts and wars have taken a heavy toll on the political and economic structures of the nation.

Despite these difficult challenges, winds of change are blowing through the country and among the diaspora.

In Somalia, on 10 September 2012, a new Somali Parliament, sitting in Mogadishu, elected a President – the first such democratic exercise in over twenty years. Holding such an election in the Somali capital would have been unthinkable a few years ago. After several failed attempts to end the conflict, the democratic process to build a united nation is succeeding. Now in Mogadishu, one can hear the noise of construction and the hum of commerce. Many Somalis have returned to contribute to the development of the nation. New restaurants and hotels open every day and the city is experiencing a construction boom. The shelled houses and buildings are being restored and occupied once more.

Despite huge obstacles, hope and progress are returning to Somalia.

We need to learn from our past. Clan rivalry ruined Somalia. The sustained peace and stability of the people of Somalia are dependent on whether we can learn to find unity and reconciliation among us. It will depend on our collective will to set aside our differences, find healing and a common destiny to work for.

In this publication, we are pleased to document ten years of the work of the Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDDD), which was established in 2006. The publication presents evidence that change is possible and that individuals can make a difference when they commit to a cause beyond their own or group interests.

*SIDDD was established 'to contribute to the creation of a stable, democratic and prosperous Somalia at peace with itself and its neighbours by creating contexts for honest conversations to heal the past and build trust for the future'.*

SIDDD firmly believes that:

- War is a fundamental cause of poverty, preventing democracy and development.
- Conflicts cannot be resolved unless the root-causes are identified and dealt with.
- The root-causes of conflict lie in the human heart, in hatred, fear, greed and dishonesty
- Everyone can play their part by struggling against the destructive forces in us, and focussing on what builds our characters and communities.
- Dialogue, bringing together people who have suffered at each other's hands, is an important way of helping people out of the victim mentality.
- Acknowledgement, apology and restitution are an effective way of healing damage done to others and restoring relationships. To forgive does not mean to forget, but to admit that we have all fallen short, and to believe that relationships can be renewed.
- Trust, the prerequisite of democracy and development, only flourishes to the degree that individuals are personally committed to the highest moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love.
- Open, just and accountable structures, which are the hall-mark of democracy, are fruits of these values.
- Reconciliation and the rebuilding of a war-torn society is a long-term process and must be pursued with determination.

We thank IofC UK, which has played a pivotal role in the establishment of SIDDD. The assistance has been enabling and empowering and has not sought

to disregard the views and concerns of the Somali people. Many Somali leaders have greatly benefitted from attending conferences at IofC's international conference centre, located in Caux in Switzerland. We are grateful to the hospitality provided to us by the Caux Foundation over many years. Established in a peaceful and salubrious location on a mountain-side near Montreux, Caux has provided us with the quiet space to turn the searchlight inwards and find forgiveness and healing for our hurts and bitter experiences.

As a result, enterprising as they are, Somalis have turned adversity into opportunity. This publication presents evidence of the numerous activities that have been done and are underway to implement our aims and objectives, such as training programmes and workshops, personal and group discussions, and interactions with international, national and local decision makers.

Some highlights:

- 1 Training programmes on dialogue facilitation and reconciliation: In 2005, experts from IofC UK's Hope in the Cities programme conducted the first dialogue facilitation training programme for select members of the Somali diaspora, which was held in London. This was the start of many similar training programmes.
- 2 SIDD inter-active personal or group sessions are not talk-shops, but transformational, often leading to specific and measurable outcomes, forging unity within the Somali community.
- 3 In 2009, Amina Khalid a SIDD trustee highlighted the need to address the alarming breakdown of communication between the older and younger generation in the UK. She and others developed the Peace Begins At Home dialogue facilitation workshop, which has so far trained over 500 members of disadvantaged communities in the UK.
- 4 Peace Begins At Home has now expanded to train members of other communities, demonstrating that Somalis, as refugees, can share their experiences of healing and reconciliation with all other communities. Through this programme, we have demonstrated that refugees can positively contribute to promote public good among our host communities. A separate publication on the work of the programme is available on demand.
- 5 SIDD trustee and activist, Zahra Hassan, through her initiative 'Women of the Horn', in collaboration with the International Centre for Eritrean Refugees and Asylum Seekers, organised leadership programme for young people. In collaboration with



SIDD, lofC UK produced an outstanding documentary about her community activities, entitled *Zahra: Change Begins At Home*, which is now available on youtube<sup>1</sup>.

- 6 Inspired by the values and principles of both SIDD and lofC UK, Abdi Gure, SIDD Treasurer, launched an innovative project, entitled *Hayaan – Moving to a Better Place* through the support of MIND in Harrow. The project addresses the growing mental health problems among the Somali diaspora. A national MIND report assessed the Hayaan project as a model on how to address community mental health problems. A video on the project, produced by lofC UK, has been widely accessed.
- 7 On 18th August 2013, SIDD and lofC UK launched the Nabad Curiye (Peace Creators) training programme at lofC-UK's centre at Greencoat Place. It focuses on training professionals, intellectuals, religious and community leaders in UK's Somali Diaspora to become skilled dialogue facilitators for the reconciliation of their community in the UK and in Somalia. It was followed by a Training of Trainers programme, and already one of the alumni has found employment as a facilitator in Mogadishu, and three others have undertaken exploratory missions in different parts of Somalia to assess the opportunities for giving training.
- 8 Several UK and other international dignitaries regularly consult SIDD on developments, concerning Somalia. The SIDD leadership participates actively in international conferences, concerning Somalia and plays a constructive role to facilitate united action.
- 9 Osman Jama Ali, Chair of SIDD, is a member of the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission of the Federal Government of Somalia. Other members of the SIDD network have played and are playing significant roles in government, parliament and the civil service.
- 10 Although our operational budgets are modest, we have achieved much. This has been through the generosity of those who work on a voluntary basis.

Despite these gains, we are fully aware that much more needs to be done achieve a peaceful and sustainable era.

Sometime ago, President George W Bush coined the term 'failed state', which became the byword of US policy in Somalia. Yet Somalia is not a failed state. It was defeated by the weight of the resources at its adversaries'

1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqjRwtcOyRU>

disposal, but never succumbed. And it is still fighting for emancipation and self-determination.

Yes, there is warlordism, terrorism, piracy, and a history of natural disaster. Yes, displacement, refugees and a lack of state authority are huge challenges. But these issues result directly from sustained foreign intervention and the deliberate fragmentation of the country into fiefdoms, enclaves and tribal territories.

That the conflict in Somalia has a local dimension – rooted in oppression, nepotism, exclusion, injustice, lack of economic opportunity and civil disobedience – is impossible to ignore. But without foreign interference, local issues would be less critical; they could be managed and controlled.

William Hague, former UK Foreign Secretary, implicitly conceded as much in a speech to members of the Somali community at Chatham House in February 2012. He said: ‘We know the international community has not always got it right in the past and that we can easily make mistakes, even when our intentions are good.’

Irrespective of the lack of government regulation and protection, Somalis have formed networks – both within the country and across borders and continents – that are bound together by ties of common concern, bridging division, disintegration and secessionism. The work of SIDD is one such example.

The SIDD experience has proven that Somalis can do the seemingly impossible.

We will devote our utmost efforts to bring dialogue and democracy to Somalia.

We have no doubt that this great nation of Africa will rise again and regain its dignity and destiny in the family of nations.

*Osman Jama Ali, Chairman, SIDD  
Mohamed Sharif Mohamud, Vice-Chairman, SIDD*

# Ten years of Somali Peace-making

## The Story of Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD) 2006-2016

### How it began

The story began in 1991 when two Somali refugees living in Sweden, Ahmed Hussein Egal and Hassan Mohamud (Geeseye) became reconciled through their friendship with Gunnar Wieselgren of the international Initiatives of Change (IofC)<sup>2</sup> movement (photos p12). As a result, Egal went to Somalia and made peace with his former guerrilla commander who, Egal felt, had imprisoned him unjustly.

In 1993, Ahmed Egal attended a peace-making conference at IofC's international conference centre in Caux, Switzerland. He and two other Somalis who were present, Ali-Nur Ali and Mohamed Ali Mirreh, identified potential peace-makers from different clans (memo p43). Thanks to the support of the Swedish Nordic Africa Institute and IofC-Sweden, 18 of them met at the Stensnäs conference centre in Sweden in January 1994, and committed themselves to work for a long-term process of reconciliation and forgiveness. They were Eng. Osman Jama Ali, Dr Yusuf Omar Al-Azhari, Mohamoud Ali Bayr, Ahmed Hussein Egal, Prof. Ali Khalif Gelayd, Soleman Ahmed Gulayr, Mrs Faduma Omar Hashi, Mrs Nurta Haji Hassan, Adam Jibril and his wife, Mohammed Jirdeh Hussein, Abdulkadir Mohamed Abdullahi (Madaxay), Gen. Abukar Liban, Mohamed Ali Mirreh, Col. Hussein Salah Musa, Dr Omar Osman (Muscat), Gen. Jama Mohamed Qalib, and Col. Abdullahi Yusuf. Hosting them were Gunnar Wieselgren, Finn Harald & Alison Wetterfors, Harry Almond and Jim Baynard-Smith.<sup>9</sup>

During the rest of the 1990s and early 2000s, several of them attended the annual conferences in Caux. Nurta Haji Hassan, a prominent lawyer and social worker also joined them.

In 2004, Osman Jama Ali who had resigned as Deputy Prime Minister of the Transitional National Government of Somalia began to attend the weekly Agenda for Reconciliation (AfR) meetings at IofC's London centre. He was joined by Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Chairman of the UK United Somali Benadir Council and former Director of Preventive Health in Somalia, and Abdi Afrah Gure, Secretary of the

2 Initiatives of Change was known until 2001 as Moral Re-Armament (MRA)

# 1991

Two Somali refugees living in Sweden, Ahmed Hussein Egal (l) and Hassan Mohamud Geeseye (r) became reconciled.



# 1994

Participants in conference, Stensnäs, Sweden, January 1994



A PLAN FOR RECONCILIATION IN SOMALIA AS OF AUGUST 11, 1993

During the session "regions in crisis and recovery - learning from one another" at the conference for Moral Re-Armament in Chaux, Switzerland, we three Somalis decided to work together for the reconciliation of our country.

During the session we had the opportunity to include in our concern for Somalia many of the participants, as attached. After valuable discussions the following four point plan emerged:

1. To find 3-5 Somali individuals from different clans who are ready to be involved in the reconciliation process and who correspond to the following criteria:
  - a) have the right kind of influence on the traditional leaders and the decision makers
  - b) have no preconceived ideas or obstacles in meeting any other Somali or other person
  - c) who are not limited in their thinking to Somalia, but are open to the wider world.

We three will identify the targets, develop a budget and co-ordinate possible funding sources and people or institutions who may cooperate such as Prayer Breakfast Fellowship (Douglas Johnston), the Life & Peace Institute (swedish friends), Conaco (Geoffrey Pugh/Cameron), Texaco (Crowe/Douglas Johnston).

We hope to have some progress on this by September 10.

2. To meet with the people we have found and with some friends of MRA who have been involved with us for Somalia. Hopefully this might happen by November 30.

3. To identify and gain commitments of a 3rd party team - with at least seven members. It should contain people of the following background:

- a) muslim representatives (lay and spiritual leaders)
- b) experienced mediators such as Louise Diamond, Douglas Johnston
- c) others: AYMAN EL MOHANDAS, Bashir Sikria, Hassan Kathout, Dr. *Abdullah* Joseph Lagu, Landrum Holing, Osman Ibrahim Shun, and others from Somalia and Sweden.

4. Make U B contacts: B B Chali (Harry Almond), J Enwe (Douglas Johnston).

Amad Hussein Egal

Mohamed Ali Mirroh

Ali-Mur H. Ali

*Amad Hussein Egal*

*Mohamed Ali Mirroh*

*Ali-Mur H. Ali*



2005



Sir Jim Lester, former Member of UK Parliament, opens meeting of Somali elders (February)



Meeting of elders chaired by Osman Jama Ali (February)



Somali delegation at Caux conference, Switzerland (August): (l-r) front row: Hussein Saleh Musa, Hussein Ali Ahmed, Yusuf Haji Mayow, Hon. Ali Mohamed Faqay, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, n/a, n/a, Faduma Osman, Fiona Leggat; second row: Sayid Ahmed Dahir, Abdiaziz Ali Ibrahim, Sayid Bakar Mukhtar, Ahmed Abdi Dahir (Shell), Omar Salad Elmi, Dr Yusuf Ali, Khalid Maou Abdulkadir, Mohamed Abukar Haji, Abdiweli, Osman Jama Ali, n/a, Peter Riddell, Campbell Leggat, n/a, Sandy Hore-Ruthven

Jamhuuriyadda Soomaaliya  
Xukuumadda Federaalka KMG ah  
Xafiiska Ra'iisul Wasaaraha



جمهورية الصومال  
الحكومة الاتحادية الفيدرالية  
مكتب رئيس الوزراء

The Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic  
Office of the Prime Minister

Ref: OPM/125/05

Jowhar, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2005

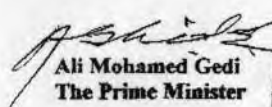
Hon. Ali Mohamed Faqi (MP)  
Hon. Mr. Abdi Warsame Issak (MA)  
Hon. Mrs. Amina Mohamed Mursal (MP)  
Dr. Hussein Ali Ahamed  
Dr. Omar Hagi Ibrahim  
Mr. Sayid Ahmed Sh. Dahir  
Mr. Abdiaziz Ali Ibrahim  
Eng. Sufi Mohamed  
Mr. Abdulkadir Shekhey Mohamed  
Mr. Ahmed Abdi Dahir

**Subject: Workshop participants**

This is to inform all of you to officially attend the workshop on "A WORLD IN CRISIS – LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER HOW TO BE A PEACEMAKER", which will take place on 12-20 August 2005, at CAUX – SWITZERLAND.

The topics of the workshop are relevant and focused on the situation today in Somalia and I hope that you will give due consideration for the benefit of the Somali nation.

Regards,

  
Ali Mohamed Gedi  
The Prime Minister







Omar Salad Elmi (l) and Sayid Ma'alow (r)



Mohamed Abukar Haji Omar,  
former Member of Parliament



(Anti-clockwise from right) Sayid Ma'alow, Hassan Mohamud, Omar Salad, Mohamed Abukar Haji Omar, Abdo, Khalid Maou, Shoble Ali Haidar



Informal discussions





Emir of Kano, Nigeria (3rd from l),  
Ahmed Dahir (3rd from r),  
Abdiaziz Ali (r)

Amb. Abdulkadir Sheekhey,  
Hon. Ali Mohamed Faqay,  
Sayid Ahmed, Dr Cornelio  
Sommaruga, Hassan  
Mohamud, Dr Ahmed Abbas,  
n/a, Khalid Maou



Reception for Hon. Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, Speaker of the Somali Parliament at IofC centre in London (October)



Dialogue Facilitation training course (December)

2006



Benadiri-Saad meeting (February): (l-r) front row: Omar Salad Elmi, Haji Yusuf Mayow, Osman Jama Ali, Mohamed Abukar Haji, Mohamed Ahmed Alim; second row: Abdurahman Warsame Elmi, Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Abdulkadir Mohamed Shirwa, Khalid Maou Abdulkadir, Hassan Mohamud Geeseye



Dialogue Facilitation participants, (April-May): (l-r) front row: n/a, n/a, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Mohamed Bashe Hassan; second row: Lawrence Fearon, Amina Khalid, Faduma Osman, Phoebe Gill, Kinsi Abdulleh, Abdullahi Mohodin Hassan, Abdulkadir Ali Gedi, Mohamed Mukhtar Ibrahim, Ahmed Omar Abati, Fiona Leggat, Abdulrahman Abdishakur, n/a, Gerald Henderson; back row: Khalid Maou, Hassan Ali Khaire, Ali Jeilani Ali, Dr Yusuf Ali, Abdiweli Jama Hussein, Osman Jama Ali, Gen. Mercorios Haile, Mohamud M. Gure, Campbell Leggat, n/a, n/a, Jim Baynard-Smith, Qasaali Faqi Abu Sheekh, n/a, n/a





Osman Jama Ali (centre), with SIDD International Patrons, Dr Cornelio Somaruga, former President of the International Red Cross (left), and Amb. Mohamed Sahnoun (right)





Launch of SIDD with Amb. Mohamed Sahnoun, former UN Special Representative to Somalia (front row 4th from left)



Panel: (l - r) Jim Baynard-Smith, Osman Jama Ali, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Amb. Mohamed Sahnoun, Imam Muhammad Nureyn Ashafa (Nigeria), Fiona Leggat, Abdi Afrah Gure

(l) Fauzia Hagi Aden and Mohamed Sahnoun



(r) Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud and Mohamud Gure

(l) Participant and Mohamed Sahnoun



(r) Participants in the conference



# 2007



SIDD delegation to Caux (August): I-r front row: Damo Abdurahman, Mohamed Kilas, Amb. Mohamed Ahmed Alim, Omar Salad Elmi, Osman Jama Ali, Amina Ahmed Warsame, Aweys Ahmed Iman; second row: Khadiga Sharif, Hashim Abdulkadir, Mohamud M Gure, Abdullahi Mohodin Hassan, Ahmed Ali Eidarus, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Abdi Afrah Gure, Mohamed Adde Mukhtar, Abdulkadir Ali Bolay, Nur Sharif Nur, Kinsi Abdulleh



Mohamud Gure introduced the Somali delegation



Somalis in the audience



Somali cultural presentation



Somali delegates in discussion

Somali Mental Health Association in London and a founder of an 'umbrella' group of Somali organisations in West London. Dr Abbas and Abdi Gure attended the 'Peace-building initiatives' conference in Caux, in August 2004.

In the autumn of 2004, Osman Jama Ali went to Kenya to participate in the latter stages of the Somali peace conference, and stood as a candidate in the presidential elections. On his return he, along with Dr Abbas and Abdi Gure, called a meeting of Somali elders in the UK in February 2005.

#### February-March 2005

30 Somali elders, including former government ministers, diplomats and journalists, representing all the major clans, came together at the IofC centre to discuss *The Future of Somalia: Building Trust and Confidence*. The themes were: *Reasons for the collapse of the Somali state, the failure of previous peace conferences, and priorities for the future*. The meeting extended to three weekends in February and March. Sir Jim Lester, former Conservative Member of Parliament, chaired the first meeting (photo p14).

The conclusions of the meetings were:

- The causes of the collapse of the Somali state were injustice, absence of political systems, agendas of external forces, ignorance and lack of common national interest.
- The reasons for the failure of all previous reconciliation conferences were that they were not initiated by Somalis, they were poorly-planned and managed, the participation was unrepresentative, they were held outside the country, and there was no process of reconciliation.
- Strategies proposed to transform Somali society from clan-based allegiance to policy-based allegiance included: 1) Overcoming clanism requires education, and the promotion of justice and reform within the family's attitude; 2) Leaders should not be elected because of their clan, but on merit and political programme; 3) Clan-based power-sharing (4.5) is not realistic and will create more problems than it solves; 4) The need is to promote genuine democracy through strengthening civil society, professionalism, education and equal opportunities.
- Strategies were proposed for initiating the reconciliation process at District, Regional, and National level: 1) The clans are not at war with each other, but clan leaders are creating a hostile

environment. 2) Reconciliation is paramount, and independent facilitators who can bring different groups together at District, Regional, and National levels are necessary. 3) The National Council for Reconciliation has an essential role in promoting real reconciliation. 4) The admission of guilt (and seeking for forgiveness) is vital in order to overcome the current situation. 5) A truth and reconciliation commission on the South African model should be established. 6) Steps in the democratisation of Somali society should include the establishment of political parties, human rights organisations and other voluntary organisations in order to promote democracy and empowerment.

- Steps towards the equitable distribution of power, economic resources and social opportunities: 1) Power needs to be defined first. 2) Research and census can identify the components in power sharing. 3) In order to attract the most experienced experts in every sector, a fair system for recruiting must be established.
- Harmonisation of efforts among Somalis in UK towards dialogue and reconciliation: 1) To contact Somalis in the UK, an organisation was needed, to be named Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD); 2) Individuals and groups who can promote the aims and objectives of the movement should be identified; 3) We need to start with London, then move on to other regions. 4) It is vital to create a core group who were committed, who understand each other and who have the same goals and objectives; 5) Women must play a full part.
- There is a need to reach out to diasporas in other parts of the world, in particular, Europe and North America, to unify Somali efforts for conflict resolution.
- In order to establish the desired high level of relationship between Somalia and the countries hosting the Somali diaspora, 1) It is vital to establish good relationships with countries and governments in each country where Somalis live; 2) We need to promote Somali professional organisations so they can link with other professional organisations.

The decision was taken to establish an association named Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy to implement the proposals. A Steering Group was appointed to carry the process forward, which included Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas (Chair), Mohamed Abukar Haji Omar, Ahmed Farah, Anab Hassan, Abdirahman Osman, Dr Yusuf Ali, Mohamed Mohamud Gure.



2009

Zahra Hassan (r) leads SIDD-Women of the Horn Dialogue Facilitation training (April-May)

'Peace Begins at Home' Intergenerational Dialogue Workshops in London Boroughs

2010

Brent Workshop (23-24 January)



Workshop facilitators: I-r: Amina Khalid, Osman Jama Ali, Mohamed Sheikh Mohamud



Dawn Butler, MP for Brent South and Minister for Youth (facing) enters the dialogue

Intergenerational Dialogue workshop in Harrow (27-28 March)



Participants in Harrow workshop





'Intergenerational Dialogue workshop in Islington (24-25 April)



Participants discussing conflicts and resolutions



Special Guests Jeremy Corbyn MP and Lela Kogbara, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Islington Borough Council



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'Intergenerational Dialogue workshop in Islington (24-25 April)



Participants discussing conflicts and resolutions



Special Guests Jeremy Corbyn MP and Lela Kogbara, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Islington Borough Council

In accordance with the recommendations of the first meetings, the first step was to train Somalis in Dialogue and Reconciliation.

August 2005

20 Somalis attended a conference 'A World in Crisis – Learning from One Another How to be Peace-makers', at lofC's International Conference Centre at Caux, Switzerland.

The Somali delegation was the biggest group among the 400 delegates from 50 countries. 10 delegates were nominated by Hon. Ali Mohamed Ghedi, Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and led by Hon. Ali Mohamed Faqay, Minister of State for Fisheries and Marine Resources, and 10 had participated in the London meetings. Somalis from Sweden, Netherlands and Switzerland also attended. (photo p14, report p41)

A significant meeting took place between Omar Salad Elmi and Said Ma'alow. (photo p14/15, report p43)

October 4

SIDD hosted a visit of Hon. Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, Speaker of the Parliament of Somalia at the lofC centre in London. (photo p15, report p47)

November-December

14 Somalis attended a Dialogue Facilitation training including Jibril Ibrahim Abdulle, Director of the Centre for Research and Dialogue in Somalia. The material was adapted from a course developed by lofC's *Hope in the Cities* programme and was delivered by Phoebe Gill and Lawrence Fearon.

## 2006

January 31st

Omar Salad Elmi, reported on a visit to Minneapolis and Toronto where he attended meetings of Hawiye representatives from across USA and Canada and proposed a new structure for the clan to repair the fragmentation that had taken place. (report p59)

February 5th

Omar Salad Elmi invited five Hawiyeh elders and five Benadiri elders to his home for dinner. This followed the beginnings of conversations between the two groups in Caux 2005. The Benadiri were able to



express their grievances at having been largely dispossessed and expelled which the Hawiyeh accepted and for which they offered unreserved apologies. They agreed that they would meet again with 20 from each community. (photo p14/15, report p60)

## April

Hassan Mohamud spent seven weeks in Mudug building on the two-years of work he had earlier done in south Galkayo to help rebuild security and infrastructure. Omar Salad subsequently lent his authority to assist in the development of a regional administration. (report p65)

Sayid Ahmed Sheikh Dahir spent several months in Bay Region assisting elders in bringing to an end an 18 month-long conflict between two sub-sub clans. (report p67)

Abdi Afrah Cure played an important role in the development of the Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations, which succeeded in bringing all the Somali organisations in the London borough into one organisation, and was the first of its kind in the UK.

## April 26

At the first meeting of future SIDD Trustees, the decision was taken to register as a charity.

## April-May

12 British Somalis (photo p15, report p69) took part in a second course in Dialogue Facilitation on five Saturdays in April and May, again delivered by Lawrence Fearon and Phoebe Gill. The participants were: Kinsi Abdulleh, Mohamed Mukhtar Ibrahim, Mohamud M. Gure, Qasaali Faqi Abu Sheekh, Abdullahi Muhdin Hassan, Abdulkadir Ali Gedi, Hassan Ali Khaire, Abdiweli Jama Hussein, Aweys Mohamed Alinoor, Hussein Saleh Musse, Ahmed Omar Abati, Mohamed Bashe Hassan.

## June-July

Abdirahman Osman (Yarisow) spent two weeks in Mogadishu in June and July establishing contacts between the UK diaspora and the Islamic Courts. On a subsequent visit to Mogadishu in October, he was also able to engage with some of the leaders of the Islamic Courts.



Workshop participants in Hackney

Intergenerational dialogue between  
Meg Hillier MP (South Hackney and  
Shoreditch) and Nadwa Abdulrahman  
(aged 11)



Peace Begins at Home Intergenerational Dialogue  
workshop in Harringey

2014



'Be the role model!' said  
15-year-old Charnay



(r-l) Mayor of Harringey, Cllr Sheila Peacock,  
Amina Dikedi, Cllr Catherine West,



Whole group session at Kurdish Community Centre



Nabad Curiye dialogue facilitation training session



2011



Irish-Somali connection at IofC conference: (l-r) Jim Lynn (Belfast), Zahra Hassan, Mohamed Sheikh Mohamud (April 2011)

2012



Hosting consultation with Rt Hon Mark Simmonds MP, UK Minister for Africa (November)



Amb. Sharif and Osman engage with Somali youth on the history of Somalia (May)



2013



HE Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud,  
President of Somalia with Osman  
(February)



SIDD meeting with HE Fawsia Yusuf Hagi Hassan, Somali Deputy Prime  
Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (January)



(l-r) SIDD Trustees: Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud,  
Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Don de Silva, Osman Jama Ali,  
Falastin Yassin (2013)

August 7-12

A total of 30 Somalis participated in conferences at the IofC international centre in Caux, Switzerland. Five Somalis attended 'Tools for Change' and 25 Somalis attended the Agenda for Reconciliation conference on the theme *An Honest Dialogue for a Clean and Just Africa*. The purpose was to build teamwork among the group and to learn from other African peace-making initiatives.

The Somalis who participated were: Ahmed Abati, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Khalid Maou Abdulkadir, Asha Aden, Osman Jama Ali, Dr Yusuf Ali, Hibaq Egal, Abdi Afrah Gure, Mohamud Gure, Abdullahi Hassan, Mohamed Bashe Hassan, Ali Jeilani, Mohamed Kilas, Rashid Sabrie, Sudi Ali Yusuf.

October 12

Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy was registered as a charity with the Charity Commission under registration number 1116372. Its objects were:

*To promote national and international conflict resolution and reconciliation with a view to relieving suffering, poverty and distress, and building and maintaining social cohesion and trust among Somalis and between Somalis and neighbouring communities, in the UK, in other countries hosting Somali refugees, and in Somalia, observing strict neutrality, without regard for clan or political allegiance.*

The first SIDD Trustees were:

- Osman Jama Ali (Chairman), Deputy Prime Minister of Transitional National Government of Somalia 2000-2003, Presidential candidate 2004
- Sir Jim Lester, former Conservative Member of Parliament and Member of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee
- Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas (Secretary), former Director General of Preventive Health in Somalia
- Abdi Afrah Gure (Treasurer), Secretary and founder member of the Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations UK
- Peter Riddell, Convenor, Agenda for Reconciliation, Initiatives of Change (IofC)

After its registration in October 2006, the Trustees adopted two priority objectives:

- *The reconciliation and integration of Somali refugees*
- *To enable skilled Somalis in the diaspora to return to Somalia and contribute to national reconstruction*

Trustees agreed that SIDD would be a non-governmental, non-political, non-sectarian, independent Charity. Its Constitution specifies no limit to the maximum number of Trustees, but a requirement for a minimum of three. Only Trustees are Members of the Charity, and they are responsible for setting strategy and for the running of the charity.

An early statement by the Trustees declared that, in accordance with the conclusions of the workshops, SIDD was established 'to contribute to the creation of a stable, democratic and prosperous Somalia at peace with itself and its neighbours by creating contexts for honest conversations to heal the past and build trust for the future'.

### **Briefings for parliamentarians and Foreign Office staff**

In the course of the year a number of Members of both Houses of Parliament and staff at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development were briefed on SIDD's development.

### **International Patrons**

Dr Cornelio Sommaruga, former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of IofC International, and Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, former UN Secretary General's Special Adviser on the Horn of Africa, and present President of IofC-International, both accepted to be International Patrons of SIDD. Both gentlemen earned the respect of Somalis for their efforts during the dark days of 1992-3.

## 2007

April-May

6 Somalis took part in a Dialogue Facilitation course: Amb. Alim Mohamed, Amina Adam, Hodan Idan, Mohamed Kilas, Mohamed Yusuf, Hassan Warsame Nur.



2015

Somali group in Caux: (l-r) Aden Khalif, Mohamud Gure, Lajeel Abdirahman, Mahdi Noor (Askar), Osman Jama Ali, Dr Yusuf Ali, Ali-Nur Ali MP, Said Mohamud, Guled Osman Abshir

Peace Begins at Home Intergenerational Dialogue,  
Andover Community Centre, Islington (January–March)

2016



Labour Party  
Leader Jeremy  
Corbyn MP was a  
special guest



Peace Begins at Home, St Michael's House, Coventry Cathedral  
(February – March)



Lord Mayor of Coventry,  
Cllr Michael Hammon  
welcomes participants



May 4

One-day conference with SIDD International Patron, Amb Mohamed Sahnoun who presided at a meeting of members of the Benadiri and Sa'ad communities, and was guest of honour at an evening reception for 100 people. Internationally-known peacemaker Imam Mohammed Nurayn Ashafa from Kaduna, Nigeria was also a guest speaker. (photo p20, report p73)

July-August

30 Somalis attended two conferences in Caux, Switzerland, 'Tools for Change' and 'Agenda for Reconciliation': Abdullahi Hassan, Mohamed Kilas, Zahra Davies, Khadija Sharif, Amina Adam, Damo Abdurahman, Nur Sharif, Aweys Iman, Abdi Gure, Mohamud Gure, Hashim Mohamed, Osman Jama Ali, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Amina Khaled, Omar Salad, Abdulkadir Ali, Mohamed Adde, Mohamed Alim, Ahmed Sharif-Ali, Mohamed Ibrahim, Kinsi Abdulleh, Fawzia Adam, Ali Jeilani. They presented a workshop on Somalia and the whole delegation contributed to an international Cultural Variety Programme. The late Mohamud Gure introduced the delegation. (photos p21)

September 7

Meeting and evening reception with Jerry McCann and Abdirahman Raghe of Interpeace.

October 11

Osman Jama Ali, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas and Abdi Gure participated in a meeting with Kaltun Hassan, head of UNDP programme, QUESTS (Qualified Expatriate Somali Technical Support) at the Department for International Development. Osman Jama outlined his vision for the return of skilled Somali expatriates to Somalia to contribute to national construction and reconciliation when the security situation allows. He reported on the courses in Dialogue Facilitation that SIDD has been organizing, and emphasized that everyone involved in such a scheme should receive training in cultural sensitivity and awareness of process of reconciliation.

Chris Mullin MP, former government minister, requested further copies of SIDD Annual Review 2006-2007 to send to the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

November-December

12 Somalis participated in a Dialogue Facilitation course of six one-day training sessions for 12 Somalis. The participants were: Asha Hagi Hashi, Falastin Yassin, Zahra Hassan, Amina Khalid, Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud, Amb. Mohamed Osman, Abdulkadir Ali Bolay, Hashim Mohammed, Hassan Ahmed, Sayid Ahmed Sharif Ali, Duhul Hussein.

December

Osman Jama Ali and Jim Baynard-Smith travelled to Stockholm for the funeral of Gunnar Wieselgren.

## 2008

Jan 7

Jeremy Corbyn MP hosted a briefing in Parliament by SIDD Trustees. Evening reception and presentation of certificates to those who had completed the course in Dialogue Facilitation.

May

Omar Salad Elmi was present as an informal mediator in Djibouti during the UN-sponsored talks between the Transitional Federal Government and the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia.

May 8

SIDD Trustees met with Muslim and Christian former militiamen who fought on different sides in the Lebanese civil war, who were then working together for reconciliation.

May 12

Omar Salad attended UN conference in Djibouti for the 'Transitional Federal Government of Somalia' (TFG) and the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS).

June 12

Representatives of FSAN, Moallim Mursal A Ibrahim, Chairman, and Abdullahi Ahmed Mohamed from the Netherlands were invited to UK to brief SIDD Trustees on their 'Brain Gain' project which has a similar aim to UNDP's QUESTS programme.

June 13-15

A Somali group participated in a conference on ‘Conversations on Trust-building<sup>3</sup>’ organised by IofC in Derbyshire. One of the participants went on to play a role in the Somali government.

June 14

Fiona Leggat, one of the founders of SIDD, died after a short illness.

June 20

Osman Jama Ali participated in an initiative in Dubai of the Somalia-based Centre for Research and Dialogue (CRD) to create a network of Somali businessmen in support of reconciliation.

June 28

A Somali-day conference took place. It was chaired by Mohamed Mukhtar, and Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud gave the keynote address. He said, *‘There is no peace without justice, justice in economic and political distribution. Human greed has to be controlled by some mechanism, but it hasn’t been created yet. Our solutions must come from us. We must talk to each other, say what went wrong in the past and learn from our mistakes.’* Topics covered focused on schemes to recruit Somali diaspora to work in Somalia, and examples of Somali umbrella organisations in other countries.

July 14

Commemoration for Fiona Leggat led by Zahra Hassan

October 6

A meeting and farewell for Falastin Yassin, a Trustee who left Britain had to return to her family in Canada.

November

Osman Jama Ali and Omar Salad participated in a conference in Nairobi organised by the UN to seek the views of elders in the diaspora on ways forward for Somalia. Osman Jama Ali chaired a session and Omar Salad delivered a paper.

Osman Jama Ali published a proposal for a transition to a democratic, non-clan based system of government for Somalia, entitled *Emergency Aid (Gurmad) for the Revival of the Somali State*. He printed 1000 copies at his own expense and it was sent to senior policy-makers in governments in Europe, the Middle East

3 <http://www.iofc.org/node/2428>



and North America, and to international organizations and to Somali community leaders in the diaspora.

#### Other developments during 2008

- Regular monthly meetings were established bringing together Somalis of different backgrounds and generations including those who had taken part in the Dialogue Facilitation courses.
- Osman Jama Ali was made an honorary member of Chatham House and he and other members of SIDD subsequently participated in seminars related to Somalia.
- Business and IT consultant, Don de Silva, led training workshops in writing funding proposals.

## 2009

January 12

First viewing of SIDD website

February 12

Monthly meeting attended by a number of young people. There were two discussion groups on 'How should SIDD respond to developments in Somalia?' and 'Responses to issues that young Somalis face in Britain?' Monthly meetings continued involving young people, which stimulated the development of intergenerational dialogues.

March 1

Amina Khalid reported on her experience of speaking in schools in Liverpool and attending a national youth conference in Leeds. (report p86)

March 26

Monthly meeting on Intergenerational Dialogue. The theme was 'How has your relationship with each other (parents/children) evolved since being in Britain in the following respects: expectations/responsibilities, individual role, language, open dialogue, honest conversation, cultural clash?' On each table four or five young and older discussed these questions. A rapporteur from each group then presented the main issues arising from the discussions.

April 2

Don de Silva started weekly training in writing funding applications.

April 6-May

Somali Women in Dialogue Facilitation, a training course for 12 Somali women took place in Brent in partnership with the Women of the Horn charity, led by its director Zahra Hassan, who is also a SIDD Trustee. (report p87)

May 8-10

Osman Jama Ali visited the Somali Community in Sheffield. He was hosted by Yusuf Abdi who was one of the first Somalis to settle in Sheffield, and he met a wide range of people from the diaspora.

August

SIDD commissioned Ridwan Haji to translate a 10-minute clip of The Imam and The Pastor<sup>5</sup> film on the Somali satellite TV station, Universal. The station was surprised by the large quantity of positive feedback it received.

September 1

Abdul-Latif El-Haj, head of the International Office for Migration (IOM) office in London addressed a SIDD meeting about the QUESTS-MIDA project that UNDP-Somalia has launched to attract skilled Somalis back to Somalia to build capacity.

## 2010

January-July

*Peace Begins at Home* Intergenerational Dialogue training workshops

During the first months of 2010, SIDD's main focus was a series of intergenerational workshops, entitled *Peace Begins at Home*, aimed at addressing inter-generational conflict and empowering parents and young people, one of the critical issues facing the Somali community. The workshops provided a safe space for discussion about conflict and reconciliation and other issues within the Somali community.

5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFh85K4NFv0>

Three workshops were held in Brent, Harrow and Islington, funded by Awards for All Big Lottery Fund. They were very successful, involving 146 participants. The senior participants included former diplomats, lecturers, and former ministers of the Somali government, whilst the younger participants were mostly students, graduates and community youth leaders.

Dawn Butler, MP for Brent South and Minister for Young Citizens and Youth Engagement was one of the guest speakers at the workshop which took place in the Harlesden Stonebridge Hillside Hub on 23-24 January.

The workshop in Harrow took place at the Harrow and Wealdstone Library Centre on 27-28 March.

Jeremy Corbyn, Labour MP for Islington North, and Lela Kogbara, Director of Strategy and Partnership for Islington Council, were among the guest speakers at the Islington workshop. It took place on 24-25 April at the Andover Community Centre. (report p90, photos p24)

#### April-May

A second course in Dialogue Facilitation took place on five Saturdays in April and May with 12 participants including a number of potential future leaders.

#### July-August

A group of Somalis, including some alumni from the Dialogue Facilitation course attended the conference on 'An Honest Dialogue for a Clean and Just Africa' at the lofC centre in Caux, Switzerland in August. There they presented a workshop on issues relating to reconciliation in Somalia. Osman Jama Ali gave a speech on Just Governance.<sup>6</sup>

#### September 30

SIDD Chairman and lofC's Chairman of the Management Team signed a Memorandum of Understanding for future partnership and collaboration.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N9zqiqTim4&t=28s>

# 2011

SIDD members were active in highlighting the plight of Somali refugees who were stranded in Libya and Yemen in the early part of the year.

June 19

The first of a series of Consultative Meetings of Somali diaspora leaders were hosted by SIDD. It was based on a paper by Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud, former Deputy Under-Secretary of the Arab League, which outlined the main issues facing the Somali community in Britain. The aim was to begin to build trust to create an umbrella organisation for the Somali community in Britain. A second meeting took place in September, and a third on the subject of Education, led by UK Somali Students, took place in October.

May 31

Osman Jama Ali attended the Somalia Baadigoob conference for 40 non-government intellectuals in South Africa organized by ACCORD (African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes).

July

Zahra Hassan on behalf of SIDD hosted Christiane Seehausen, senior adviser at the Nansen Centre for Peace and Dialogue, Lilliehammer, Norway. Christiane is working mainly with the Somali diaspora in Norway. In the course of a two-day visit, she was briefed on the activities of SIDD, IofC, the Muslim Charities Forum, the Women of the Horn Association, and met a group of young Somalis.

During the summer, stimulated by a call for unity by SIDD Vice-Chairman Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud, the Muslim Charities Forum helped to form a consortium of UK-based Somali humanitarian aid organisations, the Somali Relief and Development Forum (SRDF), coordinated by SIDD Trustee Rahma Ahmed. Under the guidance of Zahra Hassan, an SRDF employee and SIDD Trustee, this led to the formation of a consortium of 37 local humanitarian organizations in Somalia, the Somali Humanitarian Operational Consortium (SHOC).

September 13

A film about Zahra Hassan entitled *Zahra: Change Begins at Home*<sup>7</sup>, was produced by FLT films, IofC's film-making division, in collaboration with SIDD and launched at the IofC London centre. It tells her story of a refugee and single mother of four, who over-

7 Zahra: Change Begins at Home <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqjRwtcOyRU>

comes obstacles to transform her life and make a difference in the community. She tackles crucial issues that affect social harmony, breaking down communication barriers between old and young, resolving conflicts between groups and clans, and campaigning on the global issue of female genital mutilation.

#### October-November

A course in 'Training for Leadership and Change' took place between 20 October and 19 November attended by an multi-generational group of 20 Somalis, Eritreans and Ethiopians at the lofC centre in London. It was organised by Zahra Hassan, Director of Women of the Horn Association and Lul Seyoum, Director of International Centre for Eritrean Refugees and Asylum Seekers (ICERAS).

#### November

Zahra Hassan gave a talk on the Intergenerational Dialogues to students of Multicultural Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University. She also gave a workshop on the dialogues to a group of Somali community leaders in Italy.

#### Other activities during 2011...

- Lessons from the Intergenerational dialogues were shared with 6th Formers in several schools by Amina Khalid, supported by Howard Grace of the lofC Schools Service.
- Omar Salad, former Regional Governor and Member of Parliament in Somalia, spent much of the year in Nairobi seeking funding from international organizations to pilot a course in Good Governance for local authorities and NGOs. He compiled a report for the UN on the state of Local Government in all the regions of Somalia
- Inspired by the Dialogue Facilitation course for Somali women in Brent in 2009, Samiya Lerew spent several weeks in a Somali village near the border with Kenya, teaching villagers practical skills, such as sewing and jewellery-making, and also conflict-resolution. A short film of her project was screened at the lofC London centre.



Launch of SIDD with Amb. Mohamed Sahnoun, former UN Special Representative to Somalia (front row 4th from left)



Panel: (l - r) Jim Baynard-Smith, Osman Jama Ali, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Amb. Mohamed Sahnoun, Imam Muhammad Nureyn Ashafa (Nigeria), Fiona Leggat, Abdi Afrah Gure

(l) Fauzia Hagi Aden and Mohamed Sahnoun



(r) Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud and Mohamud Gure

(l) Participant and Mohamed Sahnoun



(r) Participants in the conference



# 2007



SIDD delegation to Caux (August): I-r front row: Damo Abdurahman, Mohamed Kilas, Amb. Mohamed Ahmed Alim, Omar Salad Elmi, Osman Jama Ali, Amina Ahmed Warsame, Aweys Ahmed Iman; second row: Khadiga Sharif, Hashim Abdulkadir, Mohamud M Gure, Abdullahi Mohodin Hassan, Ahmed Ali Eidarus, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Abdi Afrah Gure, Mohamed Adde Mukhtar, Abdulkadir Ali Bolay, Nur Sharif Nur, Kinsi Abdulleh



Mohamud Gure introduced the Somali delegation



Somalis in the audience



Somali cultural presentation



Somali delegates in discussion

# 2012

## January-February

With the approach of the Intergovernmental Conference on Somalia on February 23, SIDD Trustees hosted a discussion between Mr Tom Crofts, Diaspora Liaison Officer at the FCO Somalia Unit and prominent members of the Somali diaspora. SIDD members Jim Baynard-Smith and Peter Riddell wrote to Mr Crofts expressing the hope that the Prime Minister ‘in his opening remarks, might acknowledge that Britain bears some responsibility for the borders that have led to much conflict and suffering’. Subsequently, SIDD Trustees attended a meeting of the Foreign Secretary with diaspora representatives at Chatham House on March 8, during which he admitted that ‘the International Community had not always got things right with Somalia’<sup>8</sup>.

## January 26

*The Guardian* online published an article by Osman Jama Ali and Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud entitled ‘Only Turkey is showing solidarity with Somalia’s people’.<sup>9</sup> It was also carried by Hiiraan Online.

## February 22

*The Guardian* online published an article by Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud entitled, ‘Somalia can be reborn as a country of progress and prosperity’<sup>10</sup>.

SIDD Trustees attended a pre-conference reception before the Intergovernmental Conference on Somalia. It was hosted by the Rt Hon William Hague MP, Foreign Secretary, and Henry Bellingham MP, Minister for Africa, and SIDD Chairman gave both ministers a paper expressing what he hoped the conference could achieve.

## February 28

Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud spoke to the Oxford Branch of the United Nations Association on the theme ‘Somalia: Origin of the Crisis and perspectives for the Future’.

8 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/a-new-effort-to-help-somalia>

9 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jan/26/un-somalia-crisis> –

10 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2012/feb/22/>

## March-May

In March and May 2012, Amina Khalid represented SIDD at events in Switzerland. She spoke at the first African Congress organized by the Swiss African Diaspora Council, in a panel discussion on 'The Role of the Diaspora in Building Social Cohesion' in Neuchâtel. She was interviewed on African Mirror TV. She also attended a conference organized by the African Diaspora Youth Network Europe (ADYNE) and IofC Caux, Switzerland, where she delivered an Intergenerational dialogue *Peace Begins at Home* workshop for over 30 Swiss delegates representing 15 different organizations.

## May 17

Osman Jama Ali and Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud conducted a seminar with young Somalis on the recent history of Somalia on the theme 'Beyond Tribalism to United Action'<sup>12</sup>. It was organised by Guled Osman, Chairman of the Hannolaato Movement and SIDD Senior Adviser. (photo p32, report p103)

## May 30

Four SIDD Trustees took part in the Istanbul II Conference on Somalia as guests of the Turkish Government. Before the conference, Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud published an article in Al-Shahid Online entitled 'What Somalis are expecting from the Istanbul Conference'.

## June/July

Osman Jama Ali met Somali community leaders on a journey which included Qatar, Dubai, Nairobi, Mogadishu, and Berbera. He distributed widely a second edition of his pamphlet entitled 'Emergency Aid (Gurmad) for the Revival of the Somali State – Reflections on the past and future of the Somali Republic'.

Mohamed Sheikh Mohamud, Zahra Hassan and Amina Khalid facilitated a four-day Intergenerational Dialogue workshop at the IofC conference centre in Caux, Switzerland.

## October 27

Osman Jama Ali and Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud sent a letter to the Turkish Ambassador on 27th October expressing their appreciation for the humanitarian and development initiatives of the Turkish Government in Somalia. They subsequently met the

12 <http://uk.iofc.org/young-somalis-tackling-tribalism>

Ambassador's representative at the Turkish embassy in London who said that SIDD was the only Somali organisation they had met which focussed on reconciliation.

November 12

Rt Hon Mark Simmonds MP, UK Minister for Africa, held a consultation with 50 prominent British Somalis hosted by SIDD. Accompanying him was the first British Ambassador to Somalia HE Matt Baugh. There were also meetings with the Head of the Somalia Unit at the Foreign Office, and the Somalia Team at the Department for International Development. (photo p30)

December 16

In a further development of links with the Nansen Centre for Peace and Dialogue in Norway, Christiane Seerhausen, a Senior Adviser, invited SIDD Trustee Zahra Hassan to train Somali female community leaders on 'Change and Leadership'. In the course of the visit, she and Don de Silva (SIDD Senior Adviser) briefed Kjell Magne Bondevik, former Norwegian Prime Minister, now President of the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights, on SIDD's activities.

## 2013

January

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud made a request to SIDD to urgently move the focus of its reconciling work to Somalia. The request was made at a private meeting with Osman Jama Ali, the Chairman of SIDD during a visit to London. (photo p31)

January 3

HE Fauzia Yusuf Hagi Adan, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Somalia, made an official visit to SIDD in the same month. She recalled having participated in SIDD and IofC programmes in London and Switzerland. She appealed to SIDD trustees to move the focus of their work to Somalia, and to 'set up initiatives to foster trust-building, reconciliation and unity in Somalia'. She was accompanied by SIDD Vice-Chairman, Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud, former ambassador of Somalia and the Arab League, who had recently been appointed Permanent Secretary of the Somali Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (photo p31)

## March

An exploratory mission by two SIDD Trustees Osman Jama Ali and Abdi Gure visited Mogadishu where together with Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud, they assessed the feasibility of setting up a centre and a programme. They found widespread support for the proposal among other senior members of the government, parliamentarians, civil servants, prominent businessmen and intellectuals, including a number of those who have received training from SIDD or lofC. The mission was made possible by grants from the Irene Prestwich Trust and the Silvia Zuber Fund. The main conclusion of the mission was that the immediate priorities for a SIDD centre and programme would be to promote 'reconciliation, good governance and national citizenship'.

## May 9

*The Evening Standard* published an interview with SIDD Trustee Zahra Hassan, member on her attempts to fight Female Genital Mutilation.<sup>14</sup>

## June

Mr Neil Wigan, the new UK ambassador to Somalia, met with SIDD Trustees for an exchange of views. He was accompanied by Tom Crofts of the Foreign Office Somalia Unit.

## June 27

SIDD Chairman and Vice-Chairman wrote to the Chairman of Barclays Bank appealing for their cooperation with Dahabshill Bank not to be suspended as it is the main way for families in the UK to support their relatives in Somalia.

## August-October

SIDD launched *Nabad Curiye* (Peace Creators), a new course in dialogue facilitation to create a pool of diaspora Dialogue Facilitators from which to select trainers to train local Dialogue Facilitators in areas of particular tension in Somalia. It took place on seven Saturdays in September and October at the lofC centre in London. The training was delivered by Phoebe Gill and Lawrence Fearon, and was funded by lofC.

60 diaspora Somalis attended the introductory session of whom 17 took part in the course. At a meeting of the steering committee on

14 [www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/london-life/fgm-my-life-of-pain-grannies-who-ruin-young-girls-lives-and-why-it-was-a-power-trip-for-men-8608752.html](http://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/london-life/fgm-my-life-of-pain-grannies-who-ruin-young-girls-lives-and-why-it-was-a-power-trip-for-men-8608752.html)



22 August, an appeal for funds was launched and 9 members pledged donations.

At the Certificate Award Ceremony at the end of the course a prominent Somali TV presenter said that he had never seen a group of Somalis of different backgrounds working together in this way. (report p117)

Subsequently a number of participants formed a group named Nabad-Curiye to promote peace and coexistence among individuals, communities and the wider Somali people.

#### August 31

In a new development of the *Peace Begins at Home* Intergenerational Dialogue workshops, they were offered not just to Somali community but to the whole population in East and North London. The project was prompted by the realisation by SIDD Trustee Amina Khalid that the rioting in the summer of 2011 demonstrated a breakdown in communication between the generations in the wider society, and that the Somali community had a contribution to make in addressing this issue. The project was funded by grants from the Awards for All Big Lottery Fund and from the Irene Prestwich Trust.

The first of two workshops took place on 31 August-1 September at the Halkevi Kurdish community centre, Dalston Lane, Hackney. It was attended by 40 people of different ages, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Among the guest speakers was Meg Hillier MP who said 'We tolerate each other, but are we interested to understand each other? Perhaps the greatest value of inter-generational dialogue is to open our minds to inter-cultural dialogue'. (Report p109)

#### September 1

Osman Jama Ali represented the international Somali diaspora at the opening session of the Vision 2016 conference in Mogadishu.<sup>16</sup> (report p107)

#### September

A film *Hayaan – moving to a better place*<sup>17</sup> was launched. It depicts the work of SIDD Trustee, Abdi Gure, in pioneering a new approach to mental health for the Somali community. The project,

16 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCnUleKXpaY>

17 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AClg5CHmIWw>



undertaken by MIND in the London Borough of Harrow, with the support of the Kings Fund, aims recruit and train a team of ‘peer educators’ from the local Somali communities to help increase awareness of and access to mental health support. It is now being adopted in neighbouring London boroughs. The documentary was directed and edited by Dominic Weakley and his team for IofC UK.

SIDD Chairman and Vice-Chairman wrote a letter of Condolences to the Kenyan President<sup>18</sup> for the Nairobi Westgate attack.

### October 13

An article was published in the *Guardian* online by Osman Jama Ali and Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud entitled ‘Westgate attack must not divide Kenya and Somalia’.<sup>19</sup>

### November 2

An award ceremony was held at IofC-UK centre for the first Nabad Curiye trainees, chaired by Lul Seyoum, founder/director of ICERAS (International Centre for Eritrean Refugees and Asylum Seekers). 14 alumni gave their testimonies about the impact of the course on their lives.

## 2014

### January

Osman Jama Ali, Dr Muna Ismail, Member of Somali Parliament, and Ali-Nur Ali MP attended a conference on ‘Making Democracy Real at the IofC centre in Panchgani, India. It was followed by a training programme in ‘Ethics in Public Governance’ delivered by Indian IofC Centre for Governance. They agreed that it would be suitable for training politicians, civil servants, and military and police officers in Somalia if a way could be found for the course to be delivered either in Somalia or in a neighbouring country.

### February 8-9

The second of the *Peace Begins at Home* Intergenerational Dialogue workshops took place on the weekend of 8-9 February at the Kurdish Community Centre, Haringey. It was attended by 30 people of different ages and backgrounds. Among the guest speakers were

18 [www.uk.iofc.org/british-somalis-send-their-condolences-kenyan-people](http://www.uk.iofc.org/british-somalis-send-their-condolences-kenyan-people)

19 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/09/westgate-attack-not-divide-kenya-somalia-al-shabaab>

Cllr Sheila Peacock, Mayor of Haringey, and Cllr Catherine West, until recently Leader of Islington Borough Council and Labour parliamentary candidate for Hornsey and Wood Green. She stressed the importance of communication: 'You solve conflict through talking, decision-making, and growing local leadership.' (photo p35)

April 12

The intergenerational dialogues concluded with a one-day session at the Haringey Professional Development Centre. Cllr Sheila Peacock, the Mayor of Haringey, Cllr Michael Desmond, the Speaker of Hackney Council, and Catherine West, Labour Parliamentary Candidate for Hornsey and Wood Green, were guest speakers at the concluding session. Commenting on the workshop, one young woman said: 'I [used to be] almost scared to have my say at home with the family... I have learned from my participation that I need to talk honestly to my parents and stop being angry at them. I now see that my problems are not different than those of others.' (photo p35)

May 14

A SIDD delegation including Osman Jama Ali, Abdi Afrah Gure, Dr Muna Ismail, Amina Khalid and Peter Riddell made a presentation to the Bristol Branch of the Royal Africa Society at the invitation of its Chairman Gordon Holmes. The delegation was welcomed by representatives of the Somali community in Bristol. Muna Ismail subsequently developed a link with the Tropical Agriculture Association as a result of contacts at the Royal Africa Society.

May 15

Osman Jama Ali, Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud, Muna Ismail, Amina Khalid and Don de Silva met Dr Mohamed Ashmawey, the CEO of Islamic Relief in Birmingham, and also senior staff members of Muslim Hands, Tariq Nasir and Ali Osman.

May 29

Osman Jama Ali was appointed to the Somali Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Committee.

June 21-22

Osman Jama Ali, Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud were guests at the Global Diaspora Conference in Istanbul. Osman Jama Ali made a speech.

July 21

SIDD Trustees met with Mr Aweis Haddad, Director of the Somali Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, who offered assistance with future programmes in Somalia.

August-October

The course of workshops in *Peace Begins at Home* Intergenerational Dialogue was launched to create a pool of diaspora Dialogue Facilitators from which to select trainers to train local Dialogue Facilitators in areas of particular tension in Somalia. It took place on seven Saturdays in September and October 2014 at the lofC centre in London. The training was delivered by Phoebe Gill and Lawrence Fearon, and was funded by lofC. 60 diaspora Somalis attended the introductory session from whom 21 took part in the course. (report p117)

At the Certificate Award Ceremony a prominent Somali TV presenter said that he had never seen a group of Somalis of different backgrounds working together in this way.

Subsequently a number of participants formed a group named Nabad-Curiye (Peace Creators) to promote peace and coexistence among individuals, communities and the wider Somali people.

October 16

Neil Wigan, British Ambassador to Somalia and Claudia Garland, the Foreign Office liaison officer with the Somali diaspora, met for an exchange of views with SIDD Trustees.

October 18

Amina Khalid made follow-up visit to Bristol to conduct a *Peace Begins at Home* intergenerational workshop for women and to meet the Bristol Somali Youth Network.

November 23

SIDD Trustee Amina Khalid spoke on the invitation of Cllr Michael Desmond, formerly Speaker of Hackney Borough Council, at a 'Have your Say' event at the Big6 sixth form college in Hackney.

# 2015

January

Amina Khalid and Guled Osman attended the Just Governance conference at IofC-India conference centre in Panchgani, India, followed by a training course in 'Ethics in Public Governance'

August 5

Kojo Ageyman Jantuah died. A Ghanaian lawyer, trainer, and author on the slave trade, his remarkable life story helped Somalis and others make sense of issues of identity.

Autumn

Preparatory work began for a *Peace Begins at Home* Intergenerational Dialogue workshop for the Somali community in Islington, commissioned by St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in early 2016.

St Michael's House, Coventry Cathedral's centre for Reconciliation requested SIDD and IofC to organise an intergenerational dialogue for the wider community in early 2016.

# 2016

January 30, February 6, February 20

*Peace Begins at Home* Intergenerational Dialogue Workshops at Andover Community Centre, Islington in partnership with St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, IofC, Search for Common Ground. Guest speakers included Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party and Cllr Asima Sheikh, Islington Council Executive Member for Economic and Community Development. (report p123 photos 36)

February 27-28 & March 13

*Peace Begins at Home* Intergenerational Dialogue Workshop at St Michael's House, Coventry Cathedral. Osman Jama Ali gave the opening address. The Lord Mayor of Coventry, Cllr Michael Hammon welcomed participants. Guest speakers included Sabir Zazai, Chief Executive of Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, and Cllr Ram Lakha, former Lord Mayor. (photo p37)

April 4

SIDD Trustees met Maksood Ahmed, CEO, Muslim Hands in Nottingham with a view to future collaboration.

November

At the invitation of IofC Switzerland, Amina Khalid briefed an audience at in the UN headquarters library in Geneva on SIDD's intergenerational dialogue activities.

November 27-28

A second Peace Begins at Home Intergenerational Dialogue workshop for the Somali community in Islington took place, in partnership with St Ethelburga's and IofC.

December 20-21

A follow-up intergenerational dialogue workshop took place in the foyer of BBC Coventry.



# APPRECIATION

The Trustees express their deep gratitude to so many people who have given their time and expertise to the development of the organisation in the past years, in particular:

- The late Fiona Leggat who was instrumental in founding SIDD
- Sandy Hore-Ruthven who also played a significant part in founding SIDD
- Abrahaley Mebrahtu who has given his services as Independent Inspector of the Accounts
- Mohamed Abdulkadir Yahya who designed the SIDD logo
- Jim Baynard-Smith whose association with SIDD as a Senior Adviser was but a continuation of his and his wife Sally's life-long commitment to the people of the Horn of Africa
- Don de Silva, who before he became a Trustee, trained Trustees in writing funding proposals which were successful in gaining substantial grants.
- The SIDD International Patrons, Amb. Mohamed Sahnoun and Dr Cornelio Sommaruga
- Phoebe Gill, Lawrence Fearon and Denzil Nurse whose training was an essential part of the development of the SIDD network.
- Campbell Leggat, Amina Dikedi-Ajakaiye, Francis Ward, Mohamed Sheikh Mohamud and numerous others of the IofC Agenda for Reconciliation (AfR) team.

The Trustees also thank the following organisations and trusts for their generosity in money and in kind:

- Initiatives of Change UK which generously provides office and meeting space and facilities, and staff time
- The Irene Prestwich Trust
- The Leggat Family Trust which made donations in memory of the late Fiona Leggat

- The Silvia Zuber Fund
- Awards for All Big Lottery Fund for funding two series of *Peace Begins at Home* Intergenerational Dialogue Workshops
- The Karl Popper Foundation

Without their contribution, we would not have been able to do what we have done.

# Patrons, Trustees and Senior Advisers

## International Patrons

	<b>Period of Service</b>
HE Mohamed Sahnoun, former UN Special Representative to Somalia, former President of Initiatives of Change International	2006 – present
Dr Cornelio Sommaruga, former President of the International Red Cross, former President of Initiatives of Change International	2006 – present

## Trustees

Eng. Osman Jama Ali (Chairman), Deputy Prime Minister of Transitional National Government of Somalia 2000-2003	2006 – present
Sir Jim Lester, former Conservative Member of Parliament and Member of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee	2006 – 16
Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas (Secretary 2006-11, 2012-14), former Director General of Preventive Health in Somalia	2006 – present
Abdi Afrah Gure (Treasurer), Secretary and founder member of the Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations	2006 – present
Peter Riddell, (Secretary 2014- present) Convenor, Agenda for Reconciliation, Initiatives of Change	2006 – present
Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud (Vice Chairman}, former Deputy Under-Secretary of the Arab League	2009 – present
Omar Salad Elmi, mediator, former provincial governor and member of parliament	2009 – 16
Zahra Hassan, Adviser, Somali Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, Director, Women of the Horn	2009 – 16

Mohamed Sheikh Mohamud (Secretary )	2011 – 11
Mohamed A M Al-Hadi, former Member of the Somali Parliament and Founding Director Alshahid Centre for Research and Media Studies	2012 – 13
Amina Khalid Abdulkadir, Project Manager, <i>Peace Begins at Home</i> Intergenerational Dialogue workshops; Project Manager, Initiatives of Change	2012 – present
Rahma Hassan Ahmed, former Director of Somali Relief and Development	2012 – 13
Dr Muna Ismail Ahmed, Project Manager , Project Manager, Initiatives of Change	2014 – 16
Don de Silva, former Regional Information Coordinator, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	2014 – present
Mohamed Hassan Sheikh Mumin, youth and community worker	2014 – 16

### **Senior Advisors**

Jim Baynard-Smith, Full-time volunteer with Initiatives of Change	2006 – present
Don De Silva, Head of Programme Administration, Initiatives of Change	2009 – 14
Francis Ward, Intern with Initiatives of Change	2009 – 11
Amina Khalid Abdulkadir	2010 – 12
Guled Osman Abshir, Chairman of Hannolato Movement	2012 – 16

### **Charity details**

Charity address: 24 Greencoat Place, London, SW1P 1RD, UK

Registered Charity Number: 1116372



# Memorandums, Reports and Speeches

## **Report – Somali Delegation attended conference at Initiatives of Change International Conference Centre, 13-19 August 2005**

Ten of the participants in the workshops took part in a training programme at the IofC International Conference at Caux, Switzerland. They were joined by delegates nominated by Hon. Ali Mohamed Ghedi, Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and led by Hon. Ali Mohamed Faqay, Minister of State for Fisheries and Marine Resources. There were also individuals from the Somali diaspora in Sweden, Netherlands and Switzerland.

The conference on the theme of *A world in crisis – learning from one another how to be peace-makers*, 13-19 August was attended by over 400 people from 54 nations. The 20-strong Somali delegation was the biggest single group.

The main themes of the conference were: People building peace, The Journey Towards Wholeness, Building Bridges in a Multi-faith World, Fresh Hope for Africa – Creators of Peace, The Power of Change. The typical daily programme consisted of a Reflection on reconciliation, Plenary sessions, Community discussion groups, Workshops/Seminars and evening programmes.

In plenary and workshops, speakers addressed the essential elements of reconciliation, including: forgiveness, admission of guilt, social change, transcending victim/offender cycles, differentiation between 'false' and 'true' reconciliation, and between punitive and restorative justice, different methodologies, and issues relating to venues, timing and resources. The speakers emphasised that only genuine reconciliation succeeds in the long-term, and the importance modifying approaches that are effective in other situations, according to existing socio-cultural settings.

The causes of failure of the Somali peace-process that were identified in the London workshops were similar to the points raised at the workshop led by Canadian academic, Jessie Sutherland, on True and false reconciliation. Indicators of false reconciliation included hastiness, imposition and outside management, discussion of superficial issues and failure to address the real ones. True reconciliation results from an inner change of heart of which the indicators are forgiveness, acceptance, healing and transformation.

Another workshop led by Dr Barry Hart of Eastern Mennonite University, USA, focused on Trauma-healing. It emphasised the importance of sharing one's feelings and experience with others – 'if pain is not transformed, it is transferred'. The workshop also discussed the difference between punitive and restorative justice, and the development of grassroots dialogue within a community.

The Somalis were honoured to have meetings with His Highness Dr Ado Bayero, the Emir of Kano, Nigeria, (photo p15) and also with Dr Cornelio Sommaruga, President of IofC International (photo p15).

Dr Sommaruga described the experiences he had as President of the International Committee of the Red Cross when he sought to bring aid to Somalia in 1995. He said, 'Can we move the Somali peace process deeper? You will have to find the solutions; we are ready to support you.'

The Somali group also had the opportunity to hear and exchange views with a variety of practitioners from other African countries including Kofi Bassaw from Ghana, Abeba Baatai from Eritrea, George Achor from Sudan, Sam Pono from South Africa.

### **Somali presentations**

The Somali delegation made two presentations to the whole conference, conducted a workshop and participated in an international cultural evening.

In the first plenary, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas introduced the Somali participants, and gave some background to the situation in Somalia, and his association with IofC. In the session entitled, 'Fresh hope for Africa', Hon. Ali Faqay, Minister of State, briefed the conference on the present situation in Somalia, and pledged to take the message of Caux to the wider audience in Somalia.

In the Somali Workshop, Dr Yusuf Ali and Faduma Osman made a colourful power-point presentation of Somalia's historical, geopolitical, economic and social background, providing an insight into the country and its people. It highlighted the achievements of the country before the civil war, and what has happened since. Dr Ahmed Abbas and Khalid Maou introduced the 'Somali Culture of Peace' – a collection of sayings related to reconciliation that are common among the Somalis, and which reveal the traditional ways of resolving conflicts.

The Somalis' contribution to the International Cultural Event consisted of a recitation by Anab Hassan of her own poems which highlighted the role of women in peace-building and holding the

community together. And the whole Somali group gave a passionate presentation of national songs and dances, so moving to the audience that many joined them on stage!

Hon. Ali Mohamed Faqay, Minister of State, Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, said in his speech to the conference:

'I would like express our appreciation for the hard work and efforts being exerted to make this conference very useful. It has been rewarding in gaining considerable knowledge and experience.

Somalia has witnessed various conflicts within society, which have left the country without any proper government for 15 years. Recently some understanding and reconciliation has been achieved among different categories of society. I am confident that the remaining differences within the government will be eliminated hopefully very soon through dialogue and mutual understanding.

We call on the international community and agencies to support us politically and financially at this critical period. It is our conviction that through your assistance, we would be able to restore peace and stability in the region and resolve the outstanding differences within the framework of the Transitional Federal Government in a unified state. I hope our friends of Initiatives of Change International will assist us in our endeavour to heal the trauma and conflict of our people in order to replace the agony and despair with love and forgiveness based on its principles and ideals.

Last but not least, I would like to inform the audience here present today, that I will put all my efforts to take the message of Caux back home for the benefit of the wider audience there, and pray to the Almighty that by this time next year my people will have settled their differences and achieved total stability in the country.'

## **Report – Meeting between Sayid Ma'alow and Omar Salad Elmi at Caux conference, August 2005**

### **Introduction**

Sayid Ma'alow is a Somali Benadiri Elder who lived his entire life in Mogadishu. He belongs to one of the Benadiri sub-clans who were unarmed and who did not take part in the Somali civil war. He fled his country because of the war and now lives in Switzerland as a refugee. He has a very bitter memories because the USC tribal armed militias abducted his pregnant wife and kept her hostage for some period, and

later made him an internally displaced person by occupying his house. This tragic event has really dehumanized and traumatised him, and as a result, he decided never to meet or talk to a person belonging to the tribe of the militia who kidnapped his wife and occupied his house.

A member of our delegation to Caux, Khalid Maou, who is a close relative of Mr Sayid, contacted him in Geneva and convinced him to come to Caux and participate in the conference and workshops on trauma-healing. He accepted the invitation and attended several sessions. Mr Sayid was affected by the painful experience of some of the participants who were also members of the victimized tribes and accepted that reconciliation between people or within the family starts with forgiveness. Consequently Mr Sayid accepted to meet with some of the Somali delegation at Caux belonging to the tribes of USC which victimized him. His discussion with them on the past traumatising events at home started and continued for a prolonged period of time.

**Omar Salad Elmi, former Provincial Governor and Member of Parliament, wrote:**

The atmosphere in Caux was so tranquil and teeming with a spirit of peace and reconciliation; and we did not only learn a great deal about how to be peace-builders in our troubled country and elsewhere, but we were also deeply touched and inspired by the peaceful and honest spirit prevailing there.

That promoted us to initiate amongst ourselves a new kind of frank and sincere conversation on issues of peace and reconciliation. Although most of us had known each other for many decades, we had never had such discussions. We had individual and group discussions to evaluate one another and harmonise our views and outlooks about building peace and conflict resolution in our society. These individual and group discussions were so relieving and helpful that we have cleared a cloud of ambiguity and mistrust from amongst us.

As for me, I had such discussions with Mr Mohamed Abukar Omar, Mr Khalid Maou, Mr Sayid Bakar, Mr Abdulkadir Sheikhey and Mr Sayid Ma'alow from the victimised Benadiri communities of Mogadishu; and Mr Mohamed Ali Ahmed and Abdi-Aziz Ali Ibrahim from an armed community in and around Mogadishu. These one-to-one conversations were so significant and interesting that we not only renewed our lost and strained friendship and confidence, but



gained some clearer ideas about how to approach reconciliation and conflict resolution.

The most interesting of these individual conversations was with Mr Sayid Ma'alow, a former lawyer who became chief of one of the Benadiri communities. Fourteen years ago in 1991, when civil war broke out in Somalia, he swore that he would never speak to any member belonging to a certain community whose armed militia inflicted atrocities on him, his family and community. Mr Khalid Maou, a peace-builder of Benadiri community and an old friend of mine, told me about his presence in the Conference as informal observer and the deep rancour he held.

Since I am ex-member of the community that offended him, I decided to meet him. First, I shook his hand and I said to him 'I am an ex-member of the community whose militia committed crimes against you, your family and community, and I want to have a word with you.' After a few moments of hesitation, he replied, 'Mr Khalid Maou told me that you are a sincere man and for peace, thus I will listen to you.' Then I said to him 'Although I personally disagree with the atrocities my ex-community's militia did to you, on behalf of that community I ask you to accept my apology and forgive me for that offence done to you, your family and community'. After a moment's silence, he said 'I thank you for the courage and sincerity of acknowledging such atrocities and asking for apology'. He continued 'Though I am not delegated by my community to enter talks with you, I can only accept your apology and offer you forgiveness on personal basis but it is up to both communities to come together and talk about how to resolve the problem'. Finally, as individuals, we agreed that we from that moment on should work towards reconciliation, peace and justice in our respective communities in particular and in Somali society in general.

The fact that a man who fourteen years ago swore not to speak to any one from that offender community and did not speak to one ever since, had the guts to talk to me, accept my apology and offer me forgiveness – even if only on a personal basis – was a breakthrough. I think he was inspired and seized by the truthful, honest and peaceful atmosphere and spirit of Caux which influenced not only him, but the heart and mind of everyone present. This is one of the pleasant, surprise changes that often occur in the hearts and minds of people when they are exposed to the honest, peace-loving and inspiring atmosphere such as the spirit at Caux.

I think that peace and reconciliation begins with the individual. Society is made of individuals and unless the individual rid himself/herself of hate, selfishness, dishonesty and hypocrisy, he/she cannot make peace and reconciliation in the society. If the individual subscribes to these high moral principles of love, unselfishness, honesty and truth, he/she can influence and help make people and communities reconcile and resolve their differences into a peaceful outcome. Although 14 Somali 'Peace and Reconciliation Conferences' have been held in the last 15 years, nothing or little has been achieved. Only the 1991 Djibouti, 2000 Arta (Djibouti) and 2004 Imbagathi (Kenya) conferences have produced provisional governments. The first two withered away and the latter has fallen apart into rival factions before the ink of the signatures on the agreement dried.

Why are peace and reconciliation so elusive in our country, Somalia? I think that two basic elements, which are essential, are missing from the Somali situation. The first is the role of the individual who is equipped with love for humanity, unselfishness, honesty, true commitment, who takes a neutral position on the sides of the conflict, who influences other individuals and his community in peace-building and conflict resolution, and who makes bridges and networks between his and other communities. We always try to bring warring factions together especially warlords in a superficial and ambiguous way, without prior input by individuals and groups into the reconciliation process.

The second missing element is true reconciliation. All such conferences and many other fruitless peace and reconciliation attempts have failed because they were false. The stakeholders, such as traditional and religious leaders, civil society, politicians, professionals, women's groups and individual peace-activists have been excluded from the talks. For peace and reconciliation to occur, it is indispensable that the offender acknowledges his offences and asks the victim for forgiveness; that the latter gives forgiveness to the former; and that justice and restitution be addressed in the talks. Without these elements in the equation, any peace and reconciliation effort is false and hollow and will be fruitless. Therefore, Somalia needs true reconciliation.

We should also bear in mind that in political movements there are political elites of diverse qualities. In authoritarian regimes there are often hardliners and softliners, and in the opposition movements there are opportunists, moderates and radicals. Incumbent political hardliners and opposition radicals cannot make peace and reconcil-

iation. But if the incumbent softliners and moderates of the opposition come together they can make peace and conflict resolution (e.g. F.W. De Clerk and Nelson Mandela in South Africa, etc.). Unfortunately, in our situation, most political faction leaders are hardliners or radicals (tribalists) who cannot compromise and if they do, cannot settle with it because of opportunism.

Somalia needs a true peace and reconciliation engaged in by unselfish, honest, peace-loving and committed individuals, social groups, political leaders, and all stakeholders, whereby the root causes of the conflicts are acknowledged, justice and restitution addressed in due course. Since the top-down approach has been inherently false, unrepresentative and negative, the way forward is the bottom-up approach in which peace and reconciliation can be achieved in Somalia. We as a group, the members of SIDD, with the help of the Somali people and the good-willed international community will work with you and other leaders in the STFG for peace and reconciliation in our country following this bottom-up method and principles. If we all follow this approach, I think, peace and reconciliation will be achieved in Somalia.

## **Report – Reception for Hon. Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, Speaker of the Parliament of Somalia at the IofC centre in London, 4 October 2005**

**Sir Jim Lester, former Member of Parliament** welcomed the Speaker:

*In my 23 years as a Member of Parliament, during 17 of which I served on the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, I have learnt of the importance of working together. I see my role, and that of Initiatives of Change, as being positive but neutral. Parliaments are vital: they underpin democracy, control the government and represent the people. In the British constitution, this is made clear by the fact that the Speaker of Parliament is second only to the Queen.*

**Mr Jim Baynard-Smith, former officer in the British Army in the Horn of Africa,** welcomed the Speaker on behalf of IofC:

*Nabaat! IofC works towards a moral and spiritual renewal in all areas of life. It evolved out of the experience of Dr Frank Buchman, American of Swiss ancestry, who realised that effective change in the world must start with the individual. It is open to all, every class, race, and faith, and encourages each person to live the core values of their own faith and to apply it to the vital issues of the day that we all face in our personal, family, and public life.*

*It is a commitment to search and listen for God's Will, through that Inner Voice which we all have, as basis for common action. It presents a challenge to take the needs and divisions of our own society and to apply that new quality of leadership which emerges when there is a change in personal motivation and direction. A global non-political network which acts in areas such as reconciliation, addressing the root causes of corruption, poverty, and violence, applying the factor of forgiveness and healing. All of which, as you will readily understand, strengthens the moral and spiritual foundations for a democratic system.*

*What motivates some of us to give our time and energy to support your initiatives in this field? I was with the British Army in Ethiopia and Sudan. And having now spent more than 40 years involved with lofC in the Horn region, I am very conscious of the colonial legacy of inappropriate borders and systems, which were driven partly by our own narrow commercial and strategic interests – especially your frontiers with Ethiopia and Kenya – insensitive straight lines which today have partly caused such painful and costly wars and flows of refugees. The arrogance of attitude that went with this – the lack of respect for local advice, consultation and culture. These are wounds of history to be faced and healed, and much trust needs to be built. I would just like to register a personal commitment to this end, which I believe my colleagues all share, as we wish you well in your enormous task of nation-building – lil siraat al mustaqim!*

**Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, former Director General of Preventive Medicine, Somalia**

*Hon. Sharif Hassan, The Speaker of the Parliament Hon. MPs and friends,*

*This is to inform you that lofC/London has assisted us in the conduct of several meetings in which past problems have been discussed and solutions explored. This has led to the establishment of Somali Initiative of Dialogue and Democracy.*

*Besides, we were exposed to the international Initiatives of Change conference at Caux where we benefited and gained invaluable experience in dialogue and reconciliation processes.*

*We left Caux with a plan of action to:*

- *Develop the capacity of the Somali team in the UK – including training in conflict resolution and reconciliation, organisational and management skills, fundraising and publicity.*

- *Organise a series of district and regional level reconciliation dialogues to promote true reconciliation in Somalia.*

*Our vision is building peace in hostile conditions. It is the year 2005. It is now over a decade since we left the war-filled scenes of Somalia to embrace the more peaceful British culture. We, like many Somalis, regardless of clan, endured much pain. But the healing hands of time, and being members of IofC has made us realise that peace can only be restored in Somalia by us, its people, learning to forgive each other's wrong doings and to reconcile in order to achieve a brighter future. Here is an emotional story that I want to relate to you which took place in Caux.*

*It was during a recent trip to a relative's marriage ceremony in Switzerland in April 2005 at that Mr. Khalid Maou reunited with an old friend named Sayid Ma'alow from the Benadir clan to which I too belong. As they had not seen each other for a very long time, Sayid asked him: 'So what have you been up to these days, brother?' They started conversing about many issues and soon fell upon the situation of the Somalis. Khalid enthusiastically told him about his participation in the 'Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy'. He informed him about the organisation's objective of restoring peace in Somalia by persuading all clans to forgive each other, reconcile, and unite as a nation. Midway through telling him, Khalid observed that Sayid's facial expression changed from interest to what resembled disappointment.*

*Sayid asked in disbelief, 'Do you still have hope in those who raped our daughters, violated our families, and shattered our homes?' At this point, he reminded him of the abuse he was forced to tolerate from clans who hated the Benadiri. His grief poured out like a flood of emotion and his anger came back to haunt him as he recalled how members of the USC supporters had terrorised him and his family. Khalid sympathised with him but told him: 'If victims like us of such war crimes do not ever engage with our oppressors, how are we to ever reconcile?' At this he replied somewhat angrily, 'I have been neighbours with these 'offenders' in this life, but I pray to Allah that we are not neighbours in the afterlife'.*

*Khalid, a member of the Benadir clan himself, was amazed by this show of hostility, though he too had previously felt it towards the aggressors. However his experience of mixing with Somalis from clans whom he considered his enemies, including some from the USC supporters, he had discovered that they too had suffered at the hands of*



war. They too were aware of the pain they inflicted on the Benadiri people and were ready to apologise and seek forgiveness.

*Khalid admitted: "I knew it would need much convincing to make Sayid forget his pains and try to forgive his perpetrators and this initial conversation was unfortunately not long enough for me to convince him, as he soon had to leave. We began to call each other to London to discuss our general affairs and also the political affairs of Somalia. One day whilst talking to him on the phone, I asked Sayid if he would participate in some peace activities which would be attended by Somalis of all clans. He politely refused and told me he was not yet ready to face those whom he still considered his enemies. It was important for me to persuade Sayid that we Benadiri people had to join forces with other clans and unite to fight to restore peace into our country Somalia. After several further conversations with him, I asked him again if he would participate in future peace-talking activities with other Somalis, this time to my delight he responded that he would think about it, despite it still being hard for him to sit with those who he vowed never to even look at."*

*"The sense of hope I had felt when Sayid told me he might participate in the Initiatives of Change programmes, grew even stronger when he actually decided to meet the Somali participants. Despite taking a vow never to speak to members of the USC clans, Sayid found the inner strength and peace within him to sit down with the other Somalis and discuss his previously suppressed feelings. One spectacular moment came when Omar Salad, the former provincial governor and member of Parliament, apologised to Sayid on behalf of his community and 'promised to work hard so that his community would apologise to the Benadiri community' and work towards returning the belongings of the Benadiris such as land and buildings which was taken from them. Sayid gladly accepted on the condition that this promise was fulfilled. This was a joyous vision to witness."*

*Here were two men who in the past would not converse and yet were now agreeing to work together to make peace. In that inspiring moment, all hate was erased and the purpose of fighting was found futile. This is a message to all Somali communities that peace can be restored in the country they share, by simply supporting each other and working together to diminish that frightening emotion of hate.*

## **Connection between international and personal reconciliation by Peter Riddell of Initiatives of Change:**

*Your Excellency, I am inspired by the phrase you used in your recent speech to the UN meeting of Parliamentary Speakers when you said, 'We are determined to make Somalia an African model of reconciliation and peace-making'.*

*We draw a lot of lessons and encouragement from reconciliation in Western Europe after the Second World War which proves that with sufficient determination and investment of resources, it can be done. IofC (then known as Moral Re-Armament) played a significant role in the reconciliation between France and Germany.*

*Analysing the process which led to that reconciliation, the American academic, Joseph Montville, identified three principle elements:*

- 1 Humanising relations between leaders of the principle sectors of each country;*
- 2 Creating a general atmosphere favourable to reconciliation;*
- 3 Creating structures (whether economic or social) which oblige people of different backgrounds to work together.*

*Regarding the first element, 'Humanising relations between leaders of the principle sectors of each country', several thousand leaders of France and Germany met in Caux in the five years after 1946, including senior politicians, industrialists, trade unionists, and intellectuals.*

*Regarding the second element, 'Creating a general atmosphere favourable to reconciliation', the conclusion was reached that a spiritual 'key' needed to be turned in the hearts of the Germans, and consequently much effort was focussed on the German people in the immediate post-war years in the following ways:*

- Public meetings: great efforts were made to publicise the experience of people who had had a change of heart towards their enemy, notably the French politician, Mme Irène Laure, who had suffered at the hands of the Germans and who asked them to forgive her for her hatred of them – she repeated this in all the state parliaments of Germany, and in countless meetings all over the country*
- Media: a play entitled 'Hope' toured the coalmining regions which were the heart of the German economy, and 'The Forgotten Factor' which demonstrated how industrial and family relationships could be renewed; in addition there were numerous books and pamphlets published.*

*And regarding the third element, 'Creating structures (whether economic or social) which oblige people of different backgrounds to work together':*

- The outstanding project at a national level between France and Germany was that of combining the French and German coal and steel markets – the two commodities which were essential for making weapons. This common market indicated a will not to make weapons against each other in future and the fact that this happened just five years after the third war between the two countries in less than 80 years, showed that there had been a profound spiritual transformation in the two countries in quite a short space of time. This Common Market was the foundation of the European Union.*
- Numerous other examples of structures which brought the conflicting parties together, such as a process of linking French and German cities, called 'twinning', which linked hundreds of thousands of ordinary people through exchange visits and the like, and which still go on.*

*Only Somalis will know what lessons this experience has for Somalia, but in terms of these three elements I have observed:*

- Osman Jama Ali, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas and Abdi Afrah Gure have made a start in humanising relations between leaders by bringing senior Somalis of different backgrounds together on a common agenda; and Osman Jama has a vision of dialogues – honest, healing conversations – taking place across Somalia, involving politicians, traditional elders, women's organisations and others.*
- IofC has resources that have proved their effectiveness in creating an atmosphere favourable to reconciliation: the film 'Freedom' is one of several films that could be relevant if it was widely available on TV, DVD or video.*

*There are striking examples of structures in which people of different backgrounds are working together:*

- Hassan Mohamud's work with others over two years in Galkayo has seen the establishment of a number of structures and collaboration between the two sides of that town where violent confrontation has taken place*
- Abdi Afrah Gure's work in creating an umbrella group of Somali associations in West London is a model in the diaspora.*

*The real passion for reconciliation has to come from personal experience. The experience that I go back to, took place when I was at school. IofC's message to me was that, if I wanted to be part of the cure in the world rather than the disease, I had to start with changing myself. It proposed four moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. Of course each standard revealed behaviour for which I needed to apologise or restore – the way I treated my family members, school friends and teachers, for example.*

*When I asked myself whom did I not love, the school bully immediately came to mind. He had beaten me up and humiliated me several times. But whatever he had done to me, I felt that I should not hold bitterness in my heart. I went to his home and apologised for my bitterness. I don't think he really understood what I was saying, and I don't know what difference it made to him, but it made a big difference to me. I felt free of the bitterness, and I discovered that my fear of him disappeared. I got on a bus shortly after this, and there was a free seat next to him, and I was able to sit down and ask him how he was – something I would never have done before.*

*Now I see that in the world there are whole populations who are run by hatred and/or fear. This experience helped me to understand that people could be freed. I believe that what we call 'God's will' is that plan which is right for everybody – but we only find this when we cleanse our consciences.*

**Mohamed Abukar Haji Omar, former Member of Parliament**

*I would like to share with you a few of the lessons I have learned during my involvement both with IofC in London and at the conference in Caux. One of the most important things we have learned is that there are four moral standards which remain the rock on which we need to build for reconciliation and be taken as yardstick standard for human behaviour, namely Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love.*

*Another important subject is that there is 'true reconciliation' and 'false reconciliation'. In the former, the root causes of the conflict are addressed. It starts with the offender transforming himself by engaging in the process of peacemaking and reconciliation, confessing his wrongdoing and starting the journey of healing the wounds. In the latter case, the perpetrator maintains the hatred and injustice within the process of negotiation without dealing with the heart of the problem.*

*In several of the workshops organised for the Somali delegation, the*

*issues of offenders and victims in the Somali context were discussed. We also discussed how the Somali civil war has victimised and traumatised entire communities, where the victims have lost everything, have been traumatised and denied all their political and social rights, and the offenders have become the policemen, the judges, and the executioners.*

*I have known most of the members of the Somali delegation to the Caux Conference for more than two decades. However, the 12 days we stayed together at Caux provided us with an opportunity to know each other better. Our discussion focused on issues affecting the country in general and our communities in particular.*

*Peace must be built in the hearts and minds of people, rather than through agreements. This is not possible in Somalia because Somali intellectuals are themselves paralysed by ethnic loyalty. What is missing is for the Elders of the offending clans to initiate dialogue and reconciliation with the Elders of the victimised clans so as to create a common ground. This would break the culture of tribal pride by confessing the major offences and asking for forgiveness after having dealt with the root causes of injustice and perpetration. There is a Somali Benadiri saying that goes, 'He who mistreats you, forgive him; he who isolates you, relate to him; he who victimizes you, take no revenge'.*

Osman Jama Ali, introduced the Speaker, expressing his appreciation for the fact that his election had been without corruption. He had paid nothing to the voters and his speech was hate-free and criticism-free. Osman Jama said that SIDD was neutral in regard to the differences between the two camps, and believes in 'What is right rather than who is right'.

### **Speech by Sharif Hassan Sheikh Dahir, the Speaker of the Somali Parliament**

*This is the first day of Ramadan. I pray God your ambitions will be fulfilled. I am grateful for all that has been said. I am thankful for what Jim Baynard-Smith has said about past history. The British government, while it may have done some wrong things, has done many good things and we are grateful. We ask him to pass on to his government that what he has said today has been heard and will be reflected on.*

*I will try my best to cure the wrongs. I don't say that those who have suffered should continue to suffer, but it takes time to change things. Once we know the problem we can find a solution and unless there*



*is law and order in the country, there is very little we can do to make progress. There is a Somali proverb: A man has been hit by an arrow in the eye and in the buttock. Which is it better to remove first? The one in the buttock, of course, because it is best to sit down first, then we can talk! Let us put the past behind us. Let us sit down and talk.*

*The mischief in Somalia will not be solved in a day. We have to work with the existing interim Constitution. Ours is just a transitional government. We aim one day to elect our policy makers within the country. When that election comes, people can elect those they want regardless of clan. I will say something I have never said. One of the critical points was whether to allow the Ethiopian army to enter Somalia. Some argued that as the Country is taken over by powerful communities, why not let a bigger power enter; while others said that if they enter, they would never leave.*

*I share with you the ideals expressed today. From my visits to USA, Canada and UK, I observe that there is more tribalism outside the country than in it, and that tribalism in the country is often ignited from outside. Let us sit down together. The first priority is to reconcile our policy-makers. One thing we won't allow is for dictatorship to come back. I believe that Parliament is the body which should oversee the government. This structure must go ahead and be strengthened. You cannot satisfy people with money and power. You can only do it by administering justice. It is very difficult in the present circumstances. We have a charter. It will need change but it is a basis for the present. I hope we will all work together, those in the diaspora and those in Somalia, to rebuild the country for the future.*

Sir Jim Lester thanked the Speaker for what he said. He also thanked all the speakers for what had been a valuable experience. It had been very moving, and he hoped it would cause people to reflect on how important it is to move ahead and for Somalia to return to the family of nations.

**List of people who participated in any part of the programme during 2005:**

Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Chairman, UK Somali Benadir Council; Pioneer of Paediatric Medicine in Somalia, Director General of Preventive Medicine for 10 years, Deputy Minister of Health, TNG

Khalid Maou Abdulkadir, Editor and publisher of KASMO (Somali language newspaper), Deputy Chair, UK Somali Benadir Council; formerly lecturer in Faculty of Journalism, Somali National University

Mohamed Muktar Adde, Businessman

Dr Hussein Ali Ahmed, Economic advisor to the Foreign Minister; former Mayor of Mogadishu

Faduma Osman Ahmed, Mental health practitioner

Ibrahim Aingal, Businessman

Eng. Osman Jama Ali, Government Minister (1973-84 & 1989), Deputy Prime Minister TNG (2000-03)

Yusuf Omer Ali, Dean, Institute of Sciences, Somali Academy of Science & Arts; Chairman, Anglo-Somali Society

Yusuf Mohamed, Former member of Technical Staff, Jazira Steam Power Plant; doctorate in Marine Biology

Ahmed Awaleh, Businessman

Ahmed Abdi Dahir, Chairman, Somali Revival Council, UK; former advisor to Ministers of Labour, Youth and Sports

Eng. Sayid Ahmed Sh. Dahir, Former Minister

Omar Salad Elmi, Former Governor and Member of Parliament

Hon. Ali Mohamed Faqay, Minister of State for Fisheries and Marine Resources, Transitional Federal Government of Somalia

Ahmed Farah, Former Minister of Finance, Puntland, Lecturer (SIDAM) Training Institute, Camden Community Development Officer

Abdi Afrah Gure, Secretary, Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations

Mohamud Gure, Lecturer, Agro-economist, Community Leader

Awo Sufi Haji, Businessman

Abdullah Hassan, Regional Health Superintendent; Member, Somali Welfare Association

Anab Hassan, Community leader and journalist

Omer A. Hersi, Former Somali Ambassador to Sweden

Adan Abdi Hussein, Former President of Somali Banana Board and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Planning

M Ibaar, Businessman

Mohamed Hashi Mohamud-Ali, Former Professor of History and Sociology, Somali National University

Abdirashid M. Iman, Executive Committee member, RAJO-Integration, Peace & Development for Somalia (Switzerland)

Abdulaziz Ali Ibrahim, Peace activist

Yusuf Ahmed Mayow, Former Director of Department, Somali Central Bank

Said Bakar Muktar Mohammed, Former Chairman, Somali Independent Journalists Union

Abdulkadir Shekhey Mohamed, Businessman and diplomat

Hassan Mohamud, Teacher and peace activist in Galkayo, Somalia

Hussein Saleh Musse, Deputy Prime Minister, Transitional National Government of Somalia (2003-05)

Mohamoud Ahmed Nur, Businessman and Director of voluntary organisation

Mariam Nur, Community leader

Mohamed Abukar-Haji Omar, Agronomist; Former Director of Somali Fruit Enterprise, Member of Parliament, Businessman; Deputy Chair, UK Somali Benadir Council

Eng. Abdirahman Omer Osman, Deputy Area Manager, Ealing Borough Housing Team Manager; Chair of SCG; High School Governor; Volunteer

Rashid Sabrie, Director of 'Open Channel' Somali language TV station, Stockholm

Qasaley Faqay Sheikh, Director Department of Administration, Somali Coastal Development,

Mohamed Humud Sheikh, Associate Researcher, Somali Academy of Science & Arts

Hakim Wais, Managing Director, Transport and Logistics Training, Sheffield

### **Report – Hassan Mohamud: A road from a miserable, devastated town to a Regional State Peacemaking in Galmudug**

In 2001, when I was living in Sweden, I was commissioned by the Swedish Immigration Authorities to go to Somalia, to the Modug/Gal Region, to investigate whether it was safe enough to send back Somalis who had come to Sweden as refugees. I was shocked by what I discovered there, and on my return considered with my colleague Ahmed H Egal what could be done. We felt it was important to start a reconciliation process at the local level in the area from which we both originated and where our clans had fought each other for years.

We felt that through reconciliation our people could find a way towards a Somali federal state. Our co-operative in Stockholm which runs a school for adult immigrants, Kunskapsutveckling i Norden (KUIN – Development of Knowledge in the Nordic Countries), applied for financial support from the aid organisation 'Forum Syd'. This made it possible for me to spend two years in south Galkayo helping to rebuild security and infrastructure on a basis of reconciliation.

In February 2006 I spent a further period in Galkayo escorting three female Somali nursing teachers from Sweden who were there to give courses on HIV/AIDS, again funded by Forum Syd. This gave me a further opportunity to reconnect with my former colleagues in the town.

With the support of IofC-Sweden and other Swedish friends, and with the Centre for Research and Dialogue (CRD) and other NGOs in Somalia covering the costs of my security, I returned again to Galkayo to be present at an important meeting on May 15. Omar Salad and I also managed to mobilise 35 other Somalis from Europe, the USA and elsewhere to participate in the process.

For the previous two years, two of the sub-clans of my (Hawiye) clan were at war with each other: the Sa'ad, headed by Osman Ato, and the Soleimans, headed by Mohamud Guled, both at that time ministers in the TFG and both old friends of mine. One has to

remember that conflicts often occur because of natural difficulties like water shortage for grazing etc. I had to travel 11 times between their two camps, 111kms apart. Once I had to overcome a roadblock manned by 10 men from other militias. When Osman Ato phoned Mohamud Guled and invited him and his people for a talk and a meal, Guled arrived with 72 of his people. There were many intricate issues to be solved: the exchange of prisoners of war, the return of captured property etc. Finally the parties reconciled.

From July 25th to 20th August, I assisted in hosting a larger meeting in southern Galkayo to which some 300 came, some from far away. From this grew the state of Gal/Modug.

With the help of the democratic organisations we had created earlier, a democratically elected leadership for the new Gal/Modug State emerged. As the Somali constitution stipulates that Somalia will be a federal state, creating a responsible leadership for each state is a key issue. Since then, two former Somali ambassadors have been elected to lead the government and administration of the Gal/Modug State.

When the Islamic Courts gained power, they also intended to move on to Gal/Modug. They reached Bandideley, a town on the border, but were driven back by the combined forces of the Gal/Modug State, the Puntland State and the Somali Government, supported by the Ethiopian troops.

To summarise: it can be said that 1) the reconciliation of the two sub-clans has become lasting; 2) the Gal/Modug State has been created; 3) the reconciliation between southern and northern Galkayo has progressed so much that they together with the Government were able to withstand the attack of the Islamists; 4) what now remains to be done is a continued healing process between the Hawiye and Darod in the area. That means bringing individuals and groups together who have resentments, hurt feelings, and maybe demands for material compensation. Our vision for the area has taken great steps forward and the Gal/Modug State may soon be able to show a way for all of Somalia. It is not impossible that, in due course, the Gal/Modug State and the Puntland State, former enemies, could merge.

## **Report – Omar Salad Elmi, January 2006**

Omar Salad Elmi, reported on a visit to Minneapolis and Toronto where he attended meetings of Hawiye representatives from across USA and Canada and proposed a new structure for the clan to repair



the fragmentation that had taken place. He said, *'Somali society has been destroyed at clan level as well as at national level. We have been trying to bring clans together, but in order to do this, work has to be done within the clans. With other friends, I have taken the initiative to bring together the people of one clan to introduce some structures so that it can relate to other clans. Everything was in line with the work of this group, preparing my clan for the talks. We spent two weeks in Minnesota and Toronto with former army colonel and a former senior civil servant, to meet groups from southern Mudug. Representatives from across USA accepted all our proposals to introduce some structures, to make peace with other clans and to introduce some social services in our region. It was very emotional. They are ready to contribute human and financial resources for peace and reconciliation among Somalis.'*

**Report – Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas – Initial Meeting Between Members of the Benadiri and Sa'ad Communities, February 2006** (photo p18)

**Introduction**

Since the collapse of the central Somali Government in 1991 and outbreak of all-out Civil War, some of the communities in the conflict in the central, north and eastern regions have achieved peace or partial peace between them through locally-arranged reconciliation or tacit acceptance without any formal reconciliation. But in the south, especially in Mogadishu, though there have been fragile truces, peace has not been secured between armed communities, and between armed communities and unarmed victimised communities, including the Benadiri community. Having been subjected to terrorism, killing, rape and robbery, the overwhelming majority of the Benadiris had to flee from their homes in Mogadishu, Merka, Brava and other adjacent areas where they have lived for over a thousand years, and leaving behind all their possessions, sought safe haven in Western Europe and North America.

Ironically, large numbers of people from the armed communities which drove the conflict also fled and sought refuge in the same foreign countries. This shows that the Civil War terribly affected both the victims and offenders. Today, hundreds of thousands of Somali emigrants, whether from armed/offender or unarmed/victimised communities, equally yearn for reconciliation so that they may return to their homeland to live together in peace. Those in Somalia also have the same feelings. Yet from the experience of false peace

and reconciliation initiatives during the last 15 years (mostly arranged by foreigners hand-in-glove with warlords), people need a true reconciliation and peace process which begins with real stakeholders (traditional leaders, civil society groups: professions, politicians, women, youth) to solve their problems and be responsible for their security and development.

With these feelings in mind, on 5th February 2006, Mr. Omar Salad invited 10 Somali emigrants in London (five members of the Benadiri community and five members of his own Sa'ad community, a segment of Habar-Gidir) to a dinner at his home for an initial dialogue. His intention was to begin to build confidence as a basis for true reconciliation and peace process between the two communities which would eventually expand to include other communities in the UK, in other European countries and North America, and inside Somalia. The idea was originally conceived in August 2005 when some of those present at the dinner were attending an international conference at Caux, Switzerland on the theme 'A World in Crisis: Learning From One Another How to be Peacemakers' as well as in subsequent training on Dialogue Facilitation under the sponsorship of Initiatives of Change in London.

Moreover, the move was in line with the aims and objectives of the Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD). These earlier discussions had shown a common desire to address the differences between the two communities that arose from the aftermath of the Civil War.

### **Report of the Meeting**

The agenda of the meeting consisted of an introduction and an initial step of confidence-building towards true reconciliation and peace between the two communities.

The Benadiri participants were: Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Mr Mohamed Abucar-Haji Omar, Mr Khalid Maou Abdulkadir and Mr Haji Yusuf Mayow. (Mr Said Bakar Mukhtar Mohamed was absent.)

The Sa'ad participants were: Mr Abdirahman Warsame Elmi, Mr Abdulkadir Mohamed Shirwa, Mr Mohamed Ahmed Alim, Mr Hassan Mohamud Gesay and Mr Omar Salad.

Guest of Honour and Witness: Osman Jama Ali

Mr Omar Salad opened the meeting, welcomed and introduced the participants. He briefly explained how the idea of this initial reconciliatory encounter had developed. The meeting which began in a friendly and positive atmosphere, was not only among

representatives intending to start a dialogue for peace-building and reconciliation between their communities, but it was a reunion of old school-mates and former colleagues in the Somali service, army or government who had lost contact with one another in the thick and divide of a nasty civil war. After the introduction and personal conversations looking back at their old golden days and common experience and cracking jokes, the discussion moved to the main agenda item: The initial step of confidence-building towards peace and reconciliation between the two communities.

Mr Abdirahman Warsame Elmi (a former army general) took the word, extending a hearty greeting to the Benadiri participants and underlining how significant and pertinent it was to meet representatives from the Benadiri community. He expressly acknowledged the extensive victimisation and displacement that the Benadiri people suffered at the hands of the armed communities during the Civil War. He went on to say, 'Throughout their centuries-long urban and sedentary civilisation, the Benadiris have been the custodian of Somali urban, artisan, cultural, religious and educational treasure store and their victimisation and displacement means destruction of that national treasure store'.

Mr Abdirahman further stated, 'Although I and my friends present here and many of my community members did not play a part in that wrong-doing either in theory or in practice, yet some of the armed militias of my community took part in the commission of that offence. Therefore, on behalf of my friends present here and community, I give an apology to my Benadiri friends and their community for the said offence. Moreover, I and my friends, and on behalf of our community, will work hard and unreservedly to reach out to our community in order to convince everybody to apologise to the victimised Benadiri community and other Somali communities for any grievances that they have towards our community. To the Benadiri side, we ask for forgiveness so that we can work together for reconciliation and peace between our communities and for all Somalis as well as restoration of our national government – under which everybody should have justice and equality.'

Mr Abdulkadir Mohamed Shirwa, Mr Omar Salad, Mr Mohamed Ahmed Alim, Mr Hassan Mohamud Gesay all agreed to Mr Abdirahman's statement. Mr Abdulkadir added that the result of the Civil War in Somalia has been that 'ignorance, symbolised by nomadism, overthrew the urban civilisation for which the Benadiri culture was the backbone'.

Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas thanked Mr Omar Salad for inviting the two sides to meet together to start an introductory and trust-building dialogue. He thanked the Sa'ad community representatives for their encouraging remarks which acknowledged the misdeeds of their armed militias done to the Benadiri community, and their courage in asking for forgiveness. He added that he believed that the victimisation (killing, robbery and rape) done to the Benadiri community was a systematic and deliberate policy rather than unplanned and sporadic actions committed by indisciplined militias, because so far not one leader or ordinary person from the offending armed communities had spoken out against these terrible atrocities on an unarmed and peaceful community as ours. He said 'Such horrible offences can be forgiven but cannot be forgotten. What makes me very sad is that I cannot visit the place where I was born (Mogadishu) and that hurts me much. Having said this, I am of the opinion that we can work together for reconciliation and peace to find a solution for our communities and for the whole of Somali people by furthering this dialogue'. Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas said, 'At the end of the day what is needed is to make restitution to remedy the existing deep grievances and to reconstruct a just and peaceful Somalia where everybody feels safe and equal'.

Next was Mr Mohamed Abucar-Haji Omar who also expressed thanks that the meeting had been arranged. It reminded him of the stories of 'healing wounds' that he heard when attending the International Conference in Caux. He said that it was good to hear acknowledgement of the offences done to his community from the friends opposite, and asked the question 'But what must follow this acknowledgement?' He continued, 'I think that the bitter aftermath of the Civil War must be addressed, and addressed in a Somali and just way. The point is not only to remedy what happened to our Benadiri community but also to remedy what happened and what is still happening to all the Somalis. Let by-gones be by-gones. Today what is needed is to save the people who are dying because of the conflict or its consequences – above all the young people who are being used as war-fodder. Let us salvage what is left for us as a nation. I mean that the hate and trauma resulting from Civil War which our communities felt should be transformed and not transferred to the young and coming generations.'

Haji Yusuf Ahmed Mayow also expressed his thanks for this first meeting and wished God to make it a good beginning leading to success in reconciliation and peace.

Mr Khalid Maow Abdulkadir expressed his appreciation for the coming together of the two sides and his desire to translate it into a working and feasible project of reconciliation and peace between the two communities and for all Somalis. In this context, he recalled the story of Mr Sayid Ma'alow, Benadiri elder, who hated the Habar-Gidirs and swore not to talk to any of them because of the atrocities their militias did to him, his family, property and community. But a change occurred when he accepted to talk to Mr Omar Salad, a member of the community against which Mr Ma'alow held grudges, and how the two men arrived at an agreement in Caux to work together for reconciliation and peace between their communities. One or two persons can do a good deed and that can spread to all.

Mr Khalid said we should not only talk of the horror of the Civil War and the atrocities Somalis committed to each other; there were also positive stories where during the Civil War armed Somalis helped save unarmed Somalis. He said, 'For example, in 1991 at the outbreak of the Civil War, when fleeing from Mogadishu to Adado and then Bossaso, all along the way people helped and saved me. There are countless similar positive stories everywhere. In conclusion, I say that one should not lose hope of the mercy of God Who can help us to succeed in our desire to heal our wounds and make reconciliation and peace among our people a reality.'

Mr Osman Jama Ali, who is a member of neither the Benadiri nor Habar-Gidir Sa'ad communities, but who has good relations with both, took the word. He expressed similar appreciation of the importance of the meeting and hoped that it could be a good step towards a true process of reconciliation and peace between communities and by extension to all Somali communities within and outside Somalia. He pointed out that this meeting and its aims accorded with the true spirit of dialogue, reconciliation and peace-building in which several of those have engaged themselves for a long time and especially during trainings sessions at Caux in August and at Initiatives of Change in London, as well as the quest for genuine reconciliation and peace by our people. 'I agree with Mr Abdirahman Warsame Elmi that the Benadiris' centuries-long town culture has constituted the treasure store of the Somali civilisation of civility, peace, knowledge and peaceful life. Its destruction meant the loss of the Somali core sedentary urban civilisation,' Mr Osman stated. Mr Osman continued, 'The supporters and followers of the Somali armed movements (SSDF, SNM, USC, SPM, SDM, etc) belonged to a traditional nomadic background. That is why these



movements neither devised credible organisational and political platforms nor practised their political programmes in a way that was capable of forming a broad-based national front or coalition that could be an alternative to the crumbling regime; hence, the outbreak of the Civil War and the chaos and destruction that followed the disintegration of the central government. In contrast to the traditionally nomadic communities, the majority of the Somali intellectual and educated elite are found in the Benadiri community and that puts more responsibility on the Benadiris to play a leading role in the reconciliation and peace-building process and the restoration of a working and credible Somali central government.

Finally, Mr Omar Salad suggested that the participants of both sides inform their respective communities of the discussions and ideas exchanged, and prepare for another, bigger meeting to discuss deeper and further the issues they need to make a dialogue. Mr Omar suggested that the composition of the forthcoming meeting, its agenda and venue should be coordinated by representatives of both sides in due course. This suggestion was accepted by both sides' representatives present at the meeting.

### **Report – Omar Salad Elmi – Visits to Nairobi and Mudug region, May 2006**

During my stay in Nairobi 3rd-13th May 2006, I held discussions with Somali professionals who are friends and former colleagues. These centred on how the Somali intellectual community could contribute ideas and skills to the TFG to enable it to complete the national reconciliation process and become consolidated as a working government. We also discussed networking among Somali professionals in the diaspora and in Somalia so that they can work together towards creating a national movement as an alternative social and political force in the future. I also had one to one meetings with a number of TFG ministers and MPs to exchange information and ideas on Somali problems and ways of resolving them.

I stayed in Galkayo from 13 May to 27 June as part of a diaspora delegation of 17 from Western Europe and North America. We came to help set up a local administration in the south of Mudug region (including south Galkayo, the Port of Hobyo, and the surrounding towns, and villages), as well as to support a reconciliation process between two feuding Habr Gidir communities, the Sa'ad and the Soleiman.

This peace process was begun by Somali ministers of the TFG who belong to the Mudug and Galgaduud regions: Osman Hassan Ali (Atto), minister of Public Works and Ahmed Dualeh Ghelle (alias Haaf) from the Sa'ad community, and Mahamed Mohamud Guled, minister of Local Government and Mr. Mohamed Jama (Furuh), vice-minister from the Soleiman community. They first secured a ceasefire in the two year-long bloody feud in which about 400 young men lost their lives. Then the Mogadishu-based CRD (Centre for Research and Dialogue) stepped in to consolidate the peace talks between elders and other stakeholders of the communities. During May and June, CRD held two Little Tree (Geed Yare – traditional preliminary meeting under a tree) meetings to pave the way for a Big Tree meeting (Geed Weyne) where the peace would be concluded. This was led by CRD officials Yassin Salad and supervised by the CRD Director, Jabril Ibrahim Abdulle. Hassan Mohamud Geesey and I have keenly followed and injected some ideas to the elders and CRD facilitators in their laudable peace-building efforts.

Before the setting up the administrative institutions, we toured southern Mudug to survey the country, its inhabitants and resources, and identify problems and needs. It is a vast territory of about 340 by 350kms (from the sea to the hinterland and from hinterland to hinterland respectively). It was the rainy season and what pleasantly surprised us was the beauty of the countryside. We also visited Hobyo town with its harbour which was once thriving, but is now quiet and depressed, with only a few hundred residents because most inhabitants fled the fighting of the two communities which began there. For the same reason, no ships or dhows enter the harbour. We met some fishermen who transport their catches to Galkayo by road (260kms) for local consumption or for exportation by air to Dubai. When we finished our survey and returned to Galkayo, we set down a time-table and procedures for the setting up of the administrative regional organs independent of the Puntland regional administration. I left the region at this point.

After I left, instead of a regional administration, a regional state called Galmudug State, consisting of two regions headed by a president, a deputy president, some ministers and two Houses of Parliament (a House of traditional chiefs and a House of Representatives) was set up. This administration covers the territory of the Sa'ad and two minority clans, Dir and Sheikhal. The Soleiman community which mainly inhabits the adjacent Galgaduud region but also lives in some parts of south Mudug including the Port of Hobyo

did not participate in this Galmudug administration both because they were not invited and because they showed no interest in doing so because of the aftermath of the conflict which is still to be agreed conclusively.

Our diaspora group also met with the Puntland authorities of the northern half of Galkayo such as Brigadier General Abdullahi Mohamed Mire, commander of Puntland Security Forces and right-hand man of President Abdullahi Yusuf, and civilian officials such as the regional governor and the mayor. We allayed their concerns about the new administration in south Galkayo and assured them that whatever administration was formed would be committed to peace and good neighbourly relations between the people and administrations of the two sides.

I had come with the impression that the Somali countryside would be desertified, but although the Gu' (spring rains) were not good, the prairies and meadows were covered with a green carpet of grass and bush vegetation, especially the low-lying coastline stretching from about 70kms from the hinterland to the Indian Ocean coast and over 200kms along the coast. I saw countless packs of deero (Thomson Gazelle) as well as packs of ostriches with multiple chicks. However, I did not see Awl, Garanuk, Dabataag (kinds of gazelle), Kudu, Orex (Garanuk and Dabtaag, two beautiful gazelle species unique to Somalia). I was assured that there are still specimens remaining of all these creatures, although most of them are on the brink of extinction especially Orex, Garanuk and Awl with which the country was teeming 25- 30 years ago. Dik Dik, wild pigs, hyena, fox, hare, and various birds are still found in most places, but lion, cheetah, wild dogs, and leopard, which were once plentiful, are said to be virtually extinct. The land to the west and southwest of Galkayo which was once – 45 years ago when I was a camel boy – covered with thigh-high grass, thick vegetation, and in some places forest, is almost bald. There is almost no wild game and a minimum of vegetation with visible signs of desertification due to wide-spread settlement, overgrazing and resulting soil erosion

### **Report – Eng. Sayid Ahmed Sheikh Dahir – Mediation in conflict in Baidoa region, March-August 2006**

In March 2006, I travelled to Bay region to work with a group of mediators in a conflict between the Yantaar and Hubeer, sub-sub-clans of the Mirifle. The dispute, which started at the end of

November 2004, was over the ownership of a particular village, Idale, 60kms south of Baidoa. The mediators were religious leaders and traditional elders of the two clans, and of other neighbouring clans. They had been working together from the beginning to resolve the problem.

From among the mediators I selected four, two from each clan. Together, we approached elders on each side who were not among the mediators and we succeeded in persuading them each to send 15 elders to a lunch in Yantaar house in a neutral district, Qansaxdheere. In fact a lot more came that day from each side to witness the event.

Before the meeting the 15 elders had participated in a traditional process of conflict resolution covering matters of compensation. They all knew each other, but had not met for over a year because of the fighting. We placed two from each side to sit and eat from the same platter. After the meal, I spoke emphasizing that I had come thousands of miles just to help them to come together. Then I called one mediator from each side to present their side of the story and express their willingness to forgive and forget and to stop the hostility so that they could restore their fraternal relations. Then I asked both sides where the next meeting should be held. They hesitated to propose a venue, and so I asked if they would let me nominate a village. They agreed and I proposed a Yantaar village, Hakarka. They accepted my choice and we sent messengers to the surrounding areas to inform everyone that hostilities had ended and to invite them to a general meeting.

After the meeting ended one of the elders from Huber invited all the participants to a dinner at his home. He prepared a very nice dinner and brought a small generator to give light. He also invited the Duqa Degmada (mayor) and his council. There was a very good atmosphere and people were talking about how futile the conflict had been and expressed their regret.

Hundreds from both sides attended the general meeting about two weeks later. The mediators prepared the reception and the villagers provided the camel meat. After the meal there was a general reconciliation and it was agreed that if either side restarted the conflict, they would be fined and banished. Every group was asked to inform those who had not been at the meeting of the agreement, and free movement was subsequently established between the two sides, with wells and pasture being shared as before.

The final phase was to bring the two groups to the disputed village, so that they could discuss how to live together and share the resources of this village, and to rebuild the destroyed properties (which included mosques, shops and houses). I left in August 2006, and the mediators continued the work.

However, after I left, the problem that developed between the TFG and the Islamic Courts prevented the finalization of the process. We still hope that when this wider conflict has been resolved, it will be possible to complete the final stage.

## **Report – Course in Dialogue Facilitation April-May 2006**

12 British Somalis (photo p18) took part in a second course in Dialogue Facilitation on five Saturdays in April and May. The training was delivered by Lawrence Fearon and Phoebe Gill of Hope in the Cities, an Initiatives of Change programme. Each main clan grouping was invited to nominate candidates.

Course participants: Kinsi Abdulleh, Mohamed Mukhtar Ibrahim, Mohamud M. Gure, Qasaali Faqi Abu Sheekh, Abdullahi Mohodin Hassan, Abdulkadir Ali Gedi, Hassan Ali Khaire, Abdiweli Jama Hussein, Aweys Mohamed Alinoor, Hussein Saleh Musse, Ahmed Omar Abati, Mohamed Bashe Hassan

The course focused on aspects of facilitation including:

- What is facilitation – how does it differ from other skills e.g. training or debate
- Logistical needs of the dialogue
- Practice exercises around listening
- Practice exercises around how to communicate
- Different methods of communication – what works in each situation?
- Practical dialogue exercises and mini-dialogues on relevant issues chosen by the participants
- Qualities of a facilitator
- Co-facilitation – the skills required
- Getting to know ourselves as facilitators – understanding our emotions



- Understanding the process of facilitation – how to take in, make sense and decide about intervention
- How to manage the dialogue process
- Dealing with challenges and conflict
- Using silence as a tool in dialogue
- Planning the way forward – creating an action plan.

What the participants said:

*'I feel there is a need to open dialogue between different communities in Somalia'*

*'I appreciate this course and I hope that other Somalis will have the opportunity to learn what I learned.'*

*'We need more help to bring about needed change both for ourselves and the community.'*

*'This course shows us how to share ideas and how to resolve current problems.'*

*'To get involved in the process of dialogue in Somalia would be an opportunity to implement and if necessary modify the theory given to us.'*

*'It should have been longer!'*

## **Report – Abdirahman Omar Osman – Visit to Mogadishu 25 June 2006**

I felt that it was my duty to visit Somalia and to talk to all stakeholders including Civil Society groups, women's groups and other sections of the society in Mogadishu. My last visit prior to this visit was in May 2001.

During my stay I met officials from the Islamic Courts Union, Civil Society groups, Mogadishu administration and other groups, such as media, business, and some professional groups. All groups welcomed me and told me how they were pleased to see me (Somali Diaspora). People I talked to had a positive image of Somalis in the Diaspora, as they make valuable contributions to the society.

I was very impressed about these individuals' commitment and determination. Businesses in Mogadishu were thriving despite the lack of security and administration in the capital. Bakaraha Market

is the centre of the business community, where due to the lack of administration, the business community came together to help each other and that is why Bakaraha is the main market in Somalia. Mogadishu business groups are entrepreneurs and one would hope that if Mogadishu becomes a peaceful city, business will thrive.

Civil Society groups contribute enormously to education in the capital. There are many schools and universities in Mogadishu. It is evident in Mogadishu that education system is thriving; however, these schools are private and charge fees to the children's families. As a result of this, access to education is limited to those who can afford it. Somalia has had no functioning government for the last 16 years due to civil war. Trust between Somalis is almost non-existent and it requires a programme that can overcome the animosities between Somalis. Therefore, there is an urgent need to launch a programme that can make a difference to the community and at the same time to build a relationship of trust within the community

### **Report – Osman Jama Ali – Visit to Mogadishu, October 2006**

As Mogadishu was peaceful in October 2006, after the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) had taken over, the Centre for Research and Dialogue (CRD) decided to hold its Board meeting in Mogadishu and I travelled there to attend it. After the Board meeting, I stayed there a further two weeks.

I had not been in Mogadishu since I resigned as Deputy Prime Minister of the Transitional National Government in 2003. At that time, every car, bus or truck had an armed guard and all the business people had their own armed guards to look after their property. The ports and the airports were in the hands of warlords. Mogadishu was divided into more than 10 sectors each ruled by a warlord and his armed militia. So no truck could go out of or enter the city without paying at the checkpoints. Every foreigner whether journalist, businessman or doctor, who came to the city had to pay for the protection of one of the warlords. There were certain districts to which members of the government could not go.

This time, I saw Mogadishu in a completely different state. There were no armed men in the streets, and, like in the 1960s, people could move safely and without interference day and night. People were fed-up with the warlords, and grateful to the UIC for bringing peace. Another positive development was the UIC ruling that illegally-occupied properties should be returned to their owners. Many

who had fled the country were returning from the USA, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the Middle East to claim back their properties. This gave Somalis confidence because certain clans had been largely dispossessed by people of other clans. The UIC also ruled that there would be no 'clannish' revenge and that Somalis would be equal irrespective of clan. The planes were full of people returning, the international airport and the port which had been closed for more than a decade were both repaired and opened. Everyone, irrespective of clan, could go about his business. All Somalis admired the peacemaking steps, the return of properties and the reopening of hospitals and schools. Criminals were arrested and brought to court and those who had murdered were executed without any reaction from any clan. People saw the UIC as a government.

It was Ramadan and I was invited to attend an Iftar with Prof Ibrahim Addow, a member of the Shura Council and the UIC's Foreign Minister. My advice to him was that the UIC should engage in dialogue with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and not isolate themselves but maintain good relations with the International Community. I advised them to create an administrative system for the areas they were controlling. I said there were a huge number of Somalis in the diaspora who are happy with the peace the UIC had brought and that they had to cooperate with them as all the skilled people are outside the country. I told them that I was not seeking a position and only wished to offer advice as an elder. Addow said little except that they would follow the Quran, abolish clanism and make justice for all.

Later there was another Iftar organised by the UIC and there I greeted Sheikh Dahir Aweys, Sheikh Sharif and many others. That night they invited nearly 30 MPs who had come from Baidoa, Jama Mohamed Qalib, (a former minister with me in Siad Barre's government and an adviser to Foreign Minister Addow) and myself. (Jama Mohamed Qalib is one of the most honest Somali politicians who writes frankly about Somali problems.) After the dinner they honoured me by inviting me to be the first speaker. I congratulated them sincerely on the peace they brought to the capital which neither the TNG nor anyone before us since 1988 had been able to achieve. I accepted our failure and apologised for it – the first responsibility of a government is to assure internal security of life and property. I repeated that they should not isolate themselves. Sheikh Aweys, as head of the Shura council (the parliament, the highest authority) was

the most senior figure. He quoted Quranic verses and called for justice. He was clearly the most senior figure, delegating political speeches to others. When he welcomed the MPs from Baidoa, he said that they would welcome the President and Prime Minister to the capital to have a dialogue there instead of in foreign countries. He received the MPs with due respect. After me, three MPs from different regions spoke and praised the UIC for the peace they brought. At that time they were calling for dialogue and reconciliation, and I heard no one calling for jihad.

On the last day of my visit, Sheikh Sharif, the Chairman of the Executive Council, received me privately in his office. I repeated my congratulations and my message. He told me that he wanted good relations with the International Community, and that he wanted integrity, honesty and justice for the Somalis, to eradicate clanism and to follow the Quran. He was an objective and practical man and he impressed many, both Somalis and foreigners. I also met other members of the 70-strong Shura Council. I repeated the same message on phone-in programmes on Mogadishu TV and radio (Horn Afrik).

## **Report – Reception for HE Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, Friday 4th May 2007** (photo p20)

### **Welcome by Osman Jama Ali**

*We are very pleased to welcome you here, Excellency, an international figure who knows the Horn, and especially the Somalis, and the problems which have been internationalised, and the recent disasters. We are very pleased you are giving us your attention and your thoughts on how to remedy this.*

*As you well know, though we are one people, sharing religion, culture, language, we are divided along clan-lines. This is very superficial, but unfortunately, it destroyed our state.*

*I, as a member of previous governments, personally have to accept the mistakes we committed. I was a member of governments which carried out clannish nepotism. The opposition groups reacted by organising their opposition on clan lines and I was also part in that because I joined the Somali National Movement (SNM) which was clan-based. Similarly, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and the United Somali Congress (USC) were based on clan-lines. So clan against clan against clan. That is why there was no government,*

*because one clan cannot form a government, and in clannish wars, no one clan can be permanently defeated by another clan. Even small clans cannot be defeated by bigger ones.*

*So with the help of Initiatives of Change, we came together to have honest discussion, promote trust and confidence, and learn that we only have to get rid of clanism to behave as one community.*

*This is why we have created Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD) which we are launching today. Its aim is to build cohesion and trust among Somalis, and between Somalis and their neighbouring communities in all the countries hosting Somali refugees and in Somalia.*

*We are privileged that Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, former UN Special Representative to Somalia, and Dr Cornelio Sommaruga, former International President of the Red Cross, have accepted to be International Patrons. The first Trustees of the charity apart from myself are Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas as Secretary and Abdi Afrah Gure as Treasurer, and three Trustees not of Somali origin, Sir Jim Lester, a former member of Parliament with many connections to Africa, and two close colleagues from Initiatives of Change, Fiona Leggat and Peter Riddell.*

*We have identified two priorities for the work of this charity: the immediate task of reconciling and integrating Somalis into their host countries the longer term task of enabling skilled Somalis in the diaspora to return to Somalia and contribute to national reconstruction which we will do in collaboration with other organizations.*

*I believe that the international community – Britain the foremost – has been very generous to Somalis in giving them refuge. We all here are British, Norwegian, Dutch Somalis... For the last 20 years in these countries we gained a lot of experience, for example from Europe's experience of passing through many stages, such as the first and second world wars. This experience will be of great value when the opportunity comes to rebuild Somalia on a solid foundation.*

**Jim Baynard-Smith, former British Army Officer in Sudan and Eritrea**

Acknowledgement of British wrongs in the Horn of Africa

*Nabaat! It was during my military service in Sudan and Ethiopia that I came into contact with the work of Initiatives of Change, and later became involved with their programmes in five of the countries of the Horn region over the past 50 years. In the light of the current*



*scenes and reports of the terrible suffering of Somalia, I am constantly and painfully aware of one of the contributory root-causes which of course stems from the wrongs inflicted on your people by the legacy of those colonial borders and systems introduced in the time of our grandfathers. The arrogance of those straight, insensitive frontiers, imposed for our own strategic interest and administrative convenience, shames us. That deep wound and scar of history which underlies some of the current conflicts and refugee flows, affects not only the obvious Ogaden but also of course the Somaliland-Puntland relationship, as well as Northern Kenya.*

*These injustices, and the lack of respect at the time for local consultation and culture, are what motivate some of us British today, in working as full-time volunteers with lofC to support and facilitate the process of reconciliation which you are undertaking through SIDD. I would like to express this as a personal apology and commitment, in your enormous task of nation-building, 'lil siraat al mustaqim'.*

### **Fiona Leggat – Introduction to Initiatives of Change**

*As you see there are a few members of SIDD who are not Somali. And some of us have never even yet been able to set foot in Somalia. Yet each of us have a conviction and desire to support you in your work to build a new Somalia. Non-Somalis, such as myself, are not the ones who will bring peace to Somalia. And I don't believe that that is our role. Somalis can and I believe will do that. But we wish to stand with you, to support you as best we can, and to walk this journey with you. And we are grateful to our Somali colleagues that you have allowed us to carry this together with you.*

*The organisation which owns this building, Initiatives of Change, started over 80 years when a small group of people experienced incredible transformation in their own lives and decided to work together to try and remake the world. Thousands of others from over 100 countries have since been part of this movement. People of all faiths, races and backgrounds, united by a belief that each person has a special contribution to make in transforming the world.*

*We believe that to bring about any positive change it means a change in individuals – in each of us. And the best place to start is with ourselves. It is always so easy to see where others need to change. I am very good at seeing where others need to change – the faults in the rest of my family, my friends in other countries – where they are*

wrong or where they have hurt me. Yet I cannot make them change, but I do have the power change myself. And often that change not only transforms my own life, but can bring about a change in the relationships and even the world around me.

There have been incredible examples of this, in the history of IofC's work. One such example is of a former MP and Secretary General of the Socialist Women of France, Irene Laure. After the end of the second world war, where she had been a resistance fighter, Madame Laure hatred for the Germans was so great that she said that she wanted every German dead and their country 'wiped off the map of Europe'. Madame Laure came to an IofC centre in Switzerland, but was ready to leave when she saw Germans were there. Someone challenged her and asked 'How do you hope to rebuild Europe without the Germans?' She stayed on, for three nights of sleepless turmoil. 'I needed a miracle,' she said. 'I hardly believed in God, but he performed that miracle. I apologized to the Germans, not for my resistance fight, but for having desired their total destruction.' She went to Germany, addressed ten of its eleven provincial parliaments, and spoke to hundreds of thousands in meetings and on the radio. Because of her stand Germans went to France and apologized to the French people, on the radio and in the press, for what had happened during the war. The German Chancellor and the French Prime Minister said that Irene Laure did more than any other individual to reconcile their countries after hundreds of years of enmity.

So in Initiatives of change, when faced with a difficult relationship, we try not to point out where the other has wronged us, but rather ask ourselves, where could I have been wrong, or handled things better, and take responsibility for our part. This is in no way to condone or justify wrong doing. It is not about letting people off the hook or saying it did not matter. But rather it means taking responsibility for our part, no matter how small, and it creates an opportunity for the other to reflect on their role, rather than needing to be on the defensive. As Mr Baynard-Smith has rightly said, as British we have to honestly face up to our past, and the wrong that we have done as a nation, and still do today. We cannot point the finger at other nations when we have not yet faced the truth about our own.

The great Indian leader, Mahatma Gandhi, said 'Be the change you want to see in world'. He went on say that 'my life is my message' what a challenge. My life is my message. We are all a living example of something. So often the values we preach so eloquently are not the values we demonstrate by our actions. So if my life is my message

*– what message am I giving to the world. Am I a living example of the world I want to see? Or – put quite simply – in any situation, my work, family, community, the environment – am I part of the problem or part of the solution? Part of the disease or part of the cure?*

*So in Initiatives of Change we try and face this challenge. And to enable us to do this we take a couple of steps.*

*Firstly – each day we take time in silence to listen to that still small voice within. Many believe this voice is the voice of God, that God can speak to us within our hearts, for others this is the voice of conscience or intuition. But each of us at some time has heard that voice that speaks of truth, or what is right. And this is something that is always open to us, to listen. But for most of us we are so busy, filled with noise outside, and noise in our heads – that we do not even hear this voice, or make the time to listen. So we instead decide to make space, for grace.*

*Then, we also have certain values that can help us. Honesty, purity, unselfishness and love are values that encompass every part of life – to challenge us to really reach our potential. And to help us see where change may need to be made.*

*These steps can have big repercussions such as with Irène Laure, or just change the relationship within a family. When I was a teenager my Father could be quite strict about my going out, and I used to resent the fact that he did not trust me. But I also lied to him about where I was going in the evenings. When I was 19 I had a very clear thought that I did not deserve his trust unless I learnt to be honest, and so I decided to always be honest with him about my life and what I was doing even if I did not want to. But to my surprise he gave me far more freedom and trust than I ever expected or thought possible. And we developed a new kind of relationship. Learning to be honest, and not living a lie or a pretence is incredibly liberating.*

*Each of us has the opportunity to make a change in our lives in order to help create a better world. We just need to make that first step.*

*We hope that tonight will be one such step towards a safe and restored Somalia, Enshallah. Mahadsanid.*

**Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, Secretary**

Development of Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD) 2005-2007

*I am very much honoured and privileged to present to you some highlights of the activities SIDD is undertaking. It is agonising that our*

country, Somalia, is again experiencing tragic events. The pain seems never-ending. But we have to believe and work for the time when Somalis will be able to hold their heads up high in the knowledge that we have found a way of accepting each other, acknowledging wrongdoing and putting the common good above sectional interests.

Those far away in the Somali diaspora have something to contribute. There are conversations and new relationships that can develop more easily away from the intensity of conflict. The perspectives and skills that we gain in our adopted countries can be of benefit to our homeland. This is why SIDD was created.

We have made progress towards these objectives in the last two years since the first meetings took place in London between elders of different clans.

In fact, it is with great pleasure to announce that today in the afternoon, we had a very important meeting between the Habargider and Benadiri members of our both communities in which an initiative of dialogue was launched to take stock of the previous meeting between the Benadiris and Sa'ad groups. Those present have decided to compose a small working committee to lay down a blueprint on which to base the topics of discussion in the future. The meeting was chaired by Osman Jama Ali and honoured by HE Mohamed Sahnoun.

### **Financial basis of SIDD – Abdi Afrah Gure, Treasurer**

We have to work hard to raise some money in the near future. But you may ask how we operated in the last two years. We were operating on a thin line of resources which was coming from individual gifts, gifts from two trusts and the support of Initiatives of Change. It is important to point out that without the assistance of Initiatives of Change we could not run our operation. At the moment SIDD is run by volunteers who donate their time and skills. We don't have paid staff. IofC has supported us by providing space to meet at any time. They have provided us manpower, administration – they have been our backbone. This is a brief account of how we have operated. We didn't have any resource. We are now registered as a charity and we will start our fund-raising activities. We welcome any contributions.

### **The Fear of the Unknown – Imam Mohammed Nurayn Ashafa, Co-Director of Interfaith Mediation Centre, Kaduna, Nigeria**

My eminent brothers and sisters, I wish to greet everyone with the sign of peace by saying, Asalaam wa aleikum – may the peace and

*blessing be on us all. Somalia is my second home. Somalia is a place that is so much in our hearts. In Nigeria, so many of us go for Somali caps, we love your caps. So part of the identity of the average Nigerian is the Somali cap. There is a popular market for it outside Somalia. Our women even weave Somali caps.*

*Twenty years ago, when I was 16 or 17, which the issue started in Somalia, we were young Muslim activists. We had a great passion for revival – after the Iranian revolution in 1978 there was a movement for revival around the world. Then Somalia was close to our hearts, but we couldn't unwind the mystery why Somalia was in turmoil. One nation, one people, one culture, one history, one civilisation – what was the problem, why should it happen? Why Somalia, why was this happening at that particular time?*

*We think so much for our continent, the greater Africa, at this time, especially we who have religious passion from our childhood. We start looking for nations, for Muslims in strong numbers to show us the way forward facing the reality of the modern world – and unfortunately we are all working through the pains. The suffering the nation of Somalia has passed through, one of the largest dominant Muslim nations – we won't mention Nigeria which is 60-40% or 65-35%, but Somalia is 100%. When you put Somalia next to my own country – 140 million, 350 ethnic groups, 350 distinctive languages, culture, civilizations, totally unique, their dressing is unique, their food is unique – and in each language there are 10-12 dialects! As well this we have three major dominant faiths, Islam, Christianity and indigenous faiths – and most of them play a very powerful role, a determining factor, each one struggling for the political heart of the nation. We have traditionalist ministers who say that if anyone offers a prayer in a Christian or Muslim way, I have to offer it in my way. And now we have the oldest of the Abrahamic traditions, the Nigerian Jewish community, the Nigerians who have accepted Jewish traditions, Jewish faith, and they are becoming strong now fighting for space within the Nigerian nation.*

*Within this community I grew struggling to be the best of my kind, of my identity, my cultural values, not to be marginalised. So when I put this beside Somalia and ask why, I discover from my experience that fear of the unknown is one of the major challenging factors. We fear what may happen to us tomorrow, even if it is not happening to us now; we fear marginalisation, that they may suppress us; we have the fear of poverty; we have the fear of greed – I must have everything because of my tomorrow, everything must be mine, I must be in control, which gives rise to lust, selfishness; the fear of our iden-*



*tity as a clan at a micro level, our family lineage; the fear of resources; fear of losing our faith, our values; the psychological fear – I should be the best, I must be recognised. The fear of the unknown is the greatest danger facing humanity – and not only Somalia. You can see the same in Northern Ireland, they are all Europeans, they are all Christians, they have the same history from the same part of the world, but with all the modern sophistication they have difficulty to manage Northern Ireland, though they are moving ahead today, the two of them agreeing to work together.*

*The suffering Somalia has gone through has given the country a lot of positivity, that if it didn't happen 10 or 20 years ago, we wouldn't have potential people like you. You are a gift from that suffering nation, from the pain and tears, from surgical operations, our countries have to win through. So while many mothers have to become widows, and children become orphans, you are the gift that comes from that, the gift from that pain. Some of you left home when you were very young and never been there till today. Some of you are fortunate to go back, but still have to move out immediately, I want to be African, a Somali first and foremost before being a British or whatever. And I believe my brother here said 'I want to be British first and foremost' – although with Moral Rearmament they have grown beyond this identity factor, they see themselves first and foremost as humanity, they see the humanity in one another before the identity come as a second or third factor.*

*Distinguished brothers and sisters of faith, our own experience is a very painful experience, but we are able to manage it, to manage living with 350 different ethnic groups, with different cultures and traditions, we are able now to manage even within our biggest traditions, different scale of measuring our values. The Christians and Muslims have different scales of measuring our values – and in Nigeria – I am a Sharia-friendly person – Islamic law is there for me as a Muslim. In my state we have three legal systems, the Islamic Sharia Qadi court for the Muslims, the common law, the English law for the Christians, and the customary court for the indigenous people. This is all the way up to supreme court level – and then we don't fight. The politicians come to abuse us, set us against one another and use us as a political game to set us ablaze. But we realise it is there a system, even pre-colonial, how we are managing in our country. Why not Somalia do it better than us? There is no organised customary courts except for our traditional values which come from our traditional system – which are very relevant to Islam.*

*For me, the way forward for Somalia, I have seven points of advice. One is to have a new Somali with a thinking of a greater Somalia, Somalia beyond my clan, beyond my family lineage. America does not become America until they think of a greater America, beyond ethnic identity, beyond the small factor – that is what has made America what it is today. So for Somalia to be greater, we have to think beyond our ethnicity, our clan, our own small region. Allah in his infinite wisdom has put you in place around the world – I have travelled extensively, to 37 nations, and there is no country I didn't see a Somali, from Asia to Eastern Europe. I saw a Somali community in Croatia after the war and they were working hard, struggling to make a life and you always see them so proud of himself. You always see the cap and when you see the ladies they don't assimilate easily, you can see this is a Somali! I found them in Eastern Europe, in Latin America. Distinguished brothers and sisters, those hats you have around the world, that is what SIDD is doing, you have to take it back home – because if someone doesn't travel at all, he will think his father's house is the best house, his father's farm the best farm – until you move out of the soil and you see greater farms there.*

*We have to turn our weaknesses into strengths – we have weaknesses, you know them better than me – how do we make them into strengths?*

*How do we see threats as opportunities? When someone shows he hates you, you have to think, 'Now let me learn from this man, why is he thinking different from me?' Not to hit but learn from his own way of wisdom – perhaps there is something in him that will empower me to do it better than him.*

*We have to re-humanise the others – otherwise we end up demonising ourselves. That's why we get hitched to warlords to protect us – because we see evil in the others. Re-humanising the others, those people we demonise, we have to re-humanize them. You have to see yourself in the others, you have to see that that person is representing me, he is an embodiment of all I am. As I have water and blood, he has water and blood. We have to see that in every Somali – every Somali is your brother, before which clan did he come from. Every Somali needs help from me, what can I give him? If he comes to my door, what can I give him or her – not what can I take from him or her.*

*The day will come when we stop the multiplication of widows and orphans. Then we become life-savers instead of life-destroyers; healers instead of part of the disease because most of us are part of the sick-*

ness. We have a choice between paying for protection from warlords or paying those who are life-savers in our community. We raise money for SIDD to pay life-savers: 'You are a doctor, go back home and work and we will pay you from here. We will pay you from the little we receive in Europe, and we will stop paying warlords. We will tell America, the United Kingdom, the UN, the European Union, Stop! Pay doctors not warlords! We don't want any arms and ammunition in our nation any more. We don't want other neighbouring nations to come in a play a role. They must not carry their armour across our soil. We will go to the world court, we will take them up. You must train your lawyers to defend you nations non-violently.

We have to lead a hate-free life – I think that is what Sahnoun and the other brothers are living. As long as you don't lead a hate-free life, you cannot get there, because you cannot become the change without starting from yourself. As long as you have hate in your heart, you cannot grow, you end up a frustrated person, because hate ends up with radicalism which is bred by ignorance. The second stage of extremism comes with the power of over-zealousness. Terrorism is always bred by the desire for vengeance. Hold to that thing that unites us, and not our emotions and desire for those things which dividing us psychologically, because they are not even real.

For you to have a hate-free life, you must have the power of forgiveness in action. Who do you need to forgive? Firstly, forgiveness is the weapon of the courageous, not of the coward. Mohamed (pbuh) demonstrated it as an instrument. I can say in confession when I was working with the hate in my mind, before the transformations about a decade ago. I know how many Christians respect me now, how many of them appreciate the value of Islam. They say, 'What we read is different from what you are saying. How can we have more, can we have the Quran, we want to read we want to see it'. You can see the change in dynamics.

So the first instrument is to forgive yourself. Many of us find it difficult to forgive ourselves, for our action or inaction. You can see it from the sister here who said, 'I don't know why I am here, I hate this passport' because she found it difficult to forgive herself. Why have I found myself here, why our elders have failed and have made me a second-class citizen, a refugee, not as good as being at home. You say it must be this way or it must be that way. Don't we need to forgive ourselves for our shortcomings?

I am very happy about what the British soldier was saying, 'On behalf

*of my people, I am sorry for what I have done'. That is good – it takes a lot of courage to say 'I am wrong, I am sorry'. We have to say sorry to ourselves for our shortcomings and inactions – and to others whom we perceive have done evil to us. Can we forgive them even if don't they say 'I'm sorry?' The people in Mecca never tell Mohammed (pbuh) they are sorry. Mohammed said, 'Anyone who went to Abu Yusef's house (Abu Yusef is the worst enemy of Mohammed), is saved, his life and his property is safe. It is a very powerful weapon that we need to use. Are you going to extend the hand to those who murdered your brothers, murdered your sisters, who kill your family, clan heads, who destroy your family villages, are you willing to forgive them? That is the weapon of a greater Somalia and that is a power you need. Mohammed (pbuh) has done that. And to have the courage to face the evil within your own family and say that we are the people who have done wrong. Do you have the courage to say that, as a minority? So we are going to deal with them tonight, and say 'Excuse me, I feel we are not going in the right way, because this is not the history, not the culture'. We are working on our emotions and instincts. Do you have the courage to do that? You become a minority of a minority. I tell you, you feel lonely, you feel nobody is behind you. You feel the world has turned against you, because even your closest are against you. But if you work it hard, in time they will turn and follow your own part.*

*Distinguished brothers, finally, who is our mentor to resolve the clan disputes that is taking hold of us? Because we are 100% Muslim. The last thing I shall say is 'Who shall be my mentor to unite our clan, with all the intricacies within the clan, all the pains? I will say Mohammed (pbuh). How? Has Mohammed ever done that? Yes! Remember, when they are fighting before prophethood, the clans of Mecca were fighting over who would place al-aswad in the Kaaba, and every one was struggling for space. 'It has to be by my own clan, our own clan who put al-aswad, this precious stone into its place in Kaaba!' It is a stalemate – as we have a stalemate today in Somalia – and Mohammed (pbuh) came and said, 'Each clan must come and give me one person'. Unfortunately there were 12 clans and each clan brought one person, the best and the most noble among them. And he said 'All of us are going to put al-aswad in its place together'. And he put up a garment, and each one hold the edge of the garment, and holding the edge of the garment, they lift it up, and Mohammed went behind in the middle, took it over and place it on the wall. And everyone was proud that they put the nation together, and the Arabs became the uniting factor*

*Distinguished brothers and sisters, you will be the uniting factor as long as you don't have the ambition of going it alone. Don't expect the glory from anybody, don't expect to be thanked, don't expect to be honoured, because you are not working for them. You are working for the future, for the future of your children and our children, the future of your own nation and our own nation, the future of the African continent, and the future of the global family. Don't expect to be praised, don't expect political appointments, don't expect honour, don't expect reward, don't expect gratification, cash, or something to go and buy. With the seed of dialogue and democracy we have to start with ourselves, and then with others, and the coalition must carry every clan along. Go deeper into the methodology used by Mohammed – how does he carry all the clans along and unite all the Arabs who were very notorious for being so strong in their hate and struggle for clan identity. You have all these things in your faith traditions.*

*I pray Almighty Allah, in his infinite wisdom, who has chosen you as a special race, a special people, from different families, and with others who are working from different places, bring all of them together, and collectively we work to make Somalia a greater nation. But it must start with each and every individual of you. Allah uses only one to make a change in the world. In the seventh century it was Mohammed. And when you look at India, as great as it is, it was only one person, Gandhi. And when you look at America, as strong as it was in the '60s, and which has all the beautiful laws about human freedom and human values, only one person said 'We must stop this hate, racism, of the black – that they are inferior, they must stay behind, have separate schools'. He said it as a dream, 'I have a dream: one day the son of the black and the son of the white will hold themselves and raise themselves and walk on the street and sit down inside parliament to decide.' People felt that Martin Luther King was mad to take that view, but today he stand by his word and he was able to do it. And we have Ghaffar Khan in India who walked together with Gandhi to make a change in that part of the world.*

*You can make the difference not only for Somalia but for the whole Horn of Africa – the whole area is in turmoil, look at what is happening in Sudan, look at all your neighbouring countries except Kenya. Allah will give the wisdom and the courage and the ability to make a difference.*



**‘What we can do as Diaspora not only here in England’ by  
Guest of Honour, Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, President  
of the International Association of Initiatives of Change**

*Thank you very much for your contribution, your words, your pledges, and I would like to say with the speech we heard from Imam Ashafa, there is really nothing to add. I would like to invite you rather to some kind of mediation to think about all what has been said, and at the end what Imam Ashafa has told us and to think inside ourselves what can I do, what can I contribute to help reconcile our people. What can we do as diaspora not only here in England, but also elsewhere in the world. What can we do to overcome the sense of insecurity or, as Imam Ashafa said, ‘The fear of the unknown’ so that we can resolve the problems which are confronting us and think of ourselves as Somalis, as Africans. Yes of course we have identities, all of us, our families as our identities. There is reason to be proud of that, to refer to that – but it is not enough. We have to go further and say what can we do also as nationals for our country, or as members of our continent, what can we do for our continent, what can we do as human beings. Yes we have been victims of very difficult and unjust history which has divided our land, divided our people. We are still suffering from the consequences of all kinds of political moves over which we have no control. Yes we are subject to environmental degradation, and because of this we divide ourselves into clans and sub-clans and become like ghettos in which we seek refuge because of this uncertainty. Maybe we as diaspora who feel relatively more secure, relatively far from those that need to be in the ghetto, can we use this opportunity to reconcile ourselves? That is why I feel we have all of us gone through some kind of historic moment here today, listening to how we have talked to each other and with warm kind of feelings coming out of the words.*

*I was listening intently, and I was encouraged and I said to myself, ‘Maybe we are living a historic moment: the role of the diaspora in bringing a message of reconciliation, a message of hope to the people of Somalia. Every people in the world has been divided, including the European world. They were fighting each other: the Englishman, the Welshman, the Scotsman, the Corsican in France – whatever other countries you can find. But of course because of development, because of the possibility to contain that uncertainty, that insecurity, they divided themselves not as nationals or tribal or ethnic groups but as social classes: ‘I am a worker, not a Welsh or Scot, I am a worker and I have to fight for my earnings’ or ‘I am a businessman’ or ‘I am an intellectual’. In a sense social classes became more impor-*

*tant than ethnic groups because the feeling of insecurity was more or less overcome, and it became a question of social struggle. So we should be able to help our societies at home, our businessmen to do their business, our intellectuals to do their work.*

*And the women of Somalia who have suffered so much from this division of clans and who very often may find themselves with their son fighting her brother, or her husband fighting her father – because the clan system follows the man’s lineage – people intermarry then suddenly the women find themselves hostages of this – how can we spare them this? And I think what we heard throughout the day today encourages us in this. The Imam was right in recalling very strongly some passages of history which we went through and which we overcame thanks to that kind of inner transformation. We need that. And that’s why I would like you to take a few seconds to meditate the words the Imam has shared with us, just think of it and at the same time think, what shall I do? What can I do to contribute to that kind of unity, to that feeling of security we would like to see in our country? Thank you very much and let’s work for that end – I would like to assure you that in Initiatives of Change we will do our best to help you carry on, we would like to try to find other allies to see you achieve that aim. It is your home. As President of the International Association I would like to thank IofC-UK for their wonderful work which they are doing vis a vis Somalia.*

### **Report: Amina Khalid on speaking in schools in Liverpool – February 2009**

I shared my experiences in Somalia, when a cousin aged 4 was shot, my uncle shot dead. Then I spoke about coming to a new country, learning anew language, the culture, my difficulties in school with racism. How I was told to get out of the school because I was wearing the hijab, how students used to gang up and hurt me physically. I asked the students how they would handle this. Some said they would have fought back, others said you should walk away. I said I left my motherland to search for security, I didn’t want to create another war in another country. I have decided to break the chain of hate. I showed them the film, The Imam and the Pastor. It shows that we don’t all have to speak the same language. We have to pay attention to the impact we have on others. I had a lot of positive feedback. Some of the students went through similar experiences and were able to speak about it because it was a safe environment. We learnt from each other.

I then went to a national youth conference in Leeds lofC to take the opportunity to meet other young people and hear their concerns. It was to build dialogue between government and young people. 300 young people, and a government minister and police chiefs etc. It was about preventing violent extremism. There were workshops on how to become active in the communities, building bridges between different faiths, the impact of foreign policy on young people, institutional racism. It was an opportunity to tell them what I am doing.

## **Report of ‘Somali Women in Facilitation Dialogue’ training course in Brent – April-May 2009 – by Zahra Hassan**

### **Introduction**

Women of the Horn is an organisation founded in August 2007 with the main aim of providing services in UK and promoting development and humanitarian mission in Somalia. After careful consideration, Women of the Horn recommended in partnership with SIDD and develop some of the tasks that are the main priorities for both of the organisations. To facilitate a dialogue with a group of women was our main duty to fulfil in the meantime.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2009, a unique Course has started. The 20 participants who attended were very enthusiastic to learn about facilitation dialogue, and to become a future peace maker. The way the group understood the dialogue, the powerful discussions and their personal experiences among themselves showed their capacity to become facilitators. By allowing everyone to have the chance to express their views and experiences gives us the motivation to continue the course. After studying how to become future facilitators as well as peacemakers, the group had gone through an extensive course of sessions and the reality was that the DVDs were so good, as everything came out through the use of watching them.

The members of Women of the Horn were looking at the wider context of Somali issues, and how to create awareness of current and past issues of the civil war in Somalia. The DVDs of Wajer, the Imam and Pastor achieved a lot and lessons have been learned; the outcome was:

A positive resource was the Imam and the Pastor which made our sessions look emotional and feel easier than what we expected it to be. After the video, the group discussed and raised questions on the Somali issue; if the people from Nigeria who have different faith, different

languages came in to one common ground why we can't as Somalis understand to each other; one race, one faith, and one language.

### **DVD Discussions**

The group was comparing about the DVDs,

- The Imam and Pastor; the two leaders of different religions creating a dialogue within their community.
- Spear Cleansing – South Africa showed a self motivated gifted mother forgiving the man who ordered her daughter's death.
- The Wajir video was the real input to our community, where a group of women hated the killings of their community; these women became the leaders of the dialogue facilitation and its success of being peace makers.

The input was a total success, and the group started sharing their personal experiences, what they have witnessed during the civil war in period of 1990-95; the killing, the rape, the drought, the loss of loved ones, displacements, although it was very hard to listen and be part of it, moment of silence and emotional feeling were covered the room, every one broke in to tears.

After few moments, we were back in to the session; a form of dialogue was immediately started, the Wajer DVD was excellent and supportive. The approach was well taken by the group looking into the wider context of Somali issues, as well as the cause of the civil war and how to create awareness of current and past problems in Somalia. The women saw the Wajer video as relevant to their training as there were Somali women facilitating a dialogue conference for men and for youth.

The six sessions ended up with highlighting the personal responsibility of the group as a unit and move the dialogue agenda forward. The women saw from their experience together that they can be the same people who can bring about change, as it is demonstrated through the actions of the characters of the three DVDs, in order to bring peace among the community.

### **Highlighted Points:**

- **Economical factor** was one of the issues that created war.
- **Empowerment:** Equality and developing community cohesion is a source of our diversity; which shows creativity, innovation and

respect, minority and majority are equal in a bowl, equality and diversity proved – women can facilitate a dialogue amongst themselves and among men.

- **Educations and Knowledge** is the most important aspect of the film; teach the community to get enough knowledge, “killing someone is a sin and forbidden”.
- **Community engagement** was on focus and highlighted, which created dialogue during difficult times when a group of mothers, sisters, daughters and wives decided to take actions what they saw was wrong.
- **Vision:** ‘Sharing love and forgiveness are the most important to all human creations’, regardless of tribe, religion, race or political affiliation.
- **Forgiveness**, apology is in your heart; sorry is a five letters, won’t harm but heals and creates a peace full atmosphere to live in.
- **Building Trust;** creating links between the diverse community members through representation at all-men meetings, youth meetings and reaching out to the minority tribe that felt hurt by the majority tribe showed the commitment of responsibility of good leadership, serving the community. It is the same people who can bring about change, as is demonstrated through the actions of the Imam and Pastor.

### **Outcomes:**

The participants achieved a lot not only from the dialogue but also the experiences that they shared together at workshop.

### **Examples:**

One of the participants had a practical dialogue with a couple who were having problems of misunderstanding the night before her celebration day. She said at the meeting, that she told the couple that they should sit down and listen to each other before every one jumps into the conclusion. After hours of dialogue, resolved the subject which the family could not deal with.

Another participant said, the first two weeks I could not understand the dialogue but later helped me within my family to discuss issues that we never try to examine.



The participants were very constructive and would like to move on the peace dialogue to the grass-root level. Understanding what facilitation dialogue meant; a participant recalled every session and explained the importance of facilitating a peace dialogue which she admitted they were ready to implement.

Finally, a participant concluded a poem on Peace Dialogue which she wrote and read at the celebration. The poem was very powerful and emotional, some of the members were shouting to stop the pain that it was injecting and everybody in the room cried.

The last session was a very useful day seeking further ways of using the dialogue; the group involved themselves in organising a project for Well Digging in Gedo, Region, Somalia. I would strongly suggest that some form of dialogue has already commenced within the Somali women's group and clearly sharing aims and objectives of facilitating peace dialogue in Somalia. Members of Women of the Horn are becoming heavily involved in Gedo Region where they will have a centre for dialogue as well as humanitarian Aid projects. As chair of women of the Horn, I feel that lofC and SIDD could well play a bigger part of the game in the awareness and application in the arena of restorative approaches, conflict resolution, empowerment building and developing an equitable society who share common grounds of same interests.

## **Report – ‘Peace Begins at Home’ Intergenerational Dialogue workshops for the Somali community in Brent, Harrow and Islington**

### **Summary**

Between January and June 2010, in three London boroughs, 150 members of the Somali community were empowered with dialogue facilitation skills to bridge the gap between the younger and older generations. The project opened communications and explored previously ignored issues – people felt able to approach and resolve these crucial issues within the family and community.

On a personal level the project encouraged family communication, as one gentleman in Harrow stated *‘I have never spent so long sitting and talking to my family. But now I realize I need to sit with my family and talk.’* A younger participant said, *‘I have never spent so long in the company of the older generation.’* In Harrow, fathers who had fought each other in Somalia, communicated for the first time in the common concern for the younger generation.

The *Peace Begins at Home* project was a new approach to narrow the generation gap and prevent families from disintegrating. As a participant described, when families are stable, cohesion and interaction with the wider community is assured.

The dialogues were a challenge but evoked very positive reaction from most participants; one gentleman stated that the project had '*brought the community together in a manner I never thought possible.*' Several participants described the project as an essential step forward for the Somali community in Britain. Somali communities in other cities are interested to replicate this project.

A SIDD trustee was subsequently invited to Manchester Metropolitan University to speak about the project.

### **Causes and effects of intergenerational conflict**

Intergenerational conflict is one of the most serious issues facing the Somali community. It is one of the most disadvantaged minority groups in the country. During 2009, members of the charity Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD) took part in a series of consultations with organizations, such as the Sahil Housing Association in Hackney, The Bravanese Community Centre in Leyton and the Somali Benadir Centre in Walthamstow, to identify critical issues facing the community.

The pressures of life in Britain often create a dysfunctional environment, cultural confusion and intergenerational difficulties in Somali households. Frequently families are brought up by single mothers who in many cases cannot speak English. This causes obvious communication difficulties with children who are absorbing English language and culture, and may not speak Somali. These mothers are very often having to earn the family's income, keep the family home going, as well as keeping track of their children.

Somali young people attempting to assimilate into British culture can face many obstacles including bullying, racial discrimination and lack of parental support, which can cause some to drop out of education and turn to drug-abuse and recruitment into gangs, sometimes with tragic consequences.

Surveys show a severe underperformance of Somali children in schools. A South London survey in 2006 showed only 33% of Somali students obtained 5 GCSEs. Somali adults also experience very high unemployment rates – estimated at 65% for Somali men according to an IPPR\* report.

Some first generation Somali parents expect their children to grow up as they had done in Somalia. They may attempt to impose traditional Somali cultural values on their children, whereas their children are absorbing very different values from their educational and social environments.

### **Origin of the Intergenerational Dialogues**

The idea of intergenerational dialogues grew out of a workshop held by Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDDD) which showed that many Somali parents and children are eager to learn how to communicate across language, religious and cultural differences.

Designed by Somalis with support from Initiatives of Change (IofC UK), the project aimed to make a start in tackling intergenerational conflict and provide a platform on which young and old could begin to understand and become more supportive of each other.

The aim of this pilot project was to assess the need for such workshops and the effectiveness of the model, by trying to create a network of 90 people from the Somali community who are committed to promoting solutions on intergenerational division.

### **Method**

The three Boroughs of Brent, Harrow and Islington were selected as areas with high concentrations of Somalis. The two-day workshops took place over weekends in January, March and April, in well-known community centres. Considerable efforts were made to obtain participation from young and older Somalis of a wide range of clan backgrounds. Posters and flyers were distributed to Somali organizations, and applications were invited. An effort was made to ensure a fair balance of age and gender.

### **Approach**

The approach used was based on methods of facilitated dialogue and honest conversation developed by IofC, which allow grievances and frustrations to be formulated by different groups and then shared in an atmosphere of respectful attentiveness. This atmosphere is aided by the presentation of positive role models and case-studies, and the personal experiences of invited guest speakers and the facilitators themselves. This encourages participants to share their own experiences and explore solutions to problems.

### **Publicity**

News items and reports of the workshops appeared on Universal TV (Somali language satellite station), in the Brent Refugee Forum newsletter, and the IofC international website.

## **Outcomes**

Between 40 and 74 participants attended each workshop (Brent, 1st day: 40, 2nd day 40; Harrow, 1st day: 74, 2nd day; 55; Islington, 1st day: 45, 2nd day: 55.) A high proportion attended both days of each workshop. As incentives, lunch and a travel allowance were offered. Facilitation was conducted by people of Somali origin, representing both generations. A final gathering for participants from all three workshops took place on 12th June at IofC's London centre in Victoria.

## **Funding**

The pilot project had a budget of £10,500 which was made possible by grants from The Big Lottery Fund Awards for All, and Initiatives of Change UK (IofC UK), and by the support of IofC staff members and associates and the use of IofC office and meeting facilities. SIDD extends heartfelt gratitude to all those involved for their generosity.

### **These funds were used for:**

Marketing: to inform the Somali community about the workshops, including initial research, the creation and distribution of application forms, leaflets and posters,

Planning workshops: cost of organizing team (3 people) of meeting; communicating with participants, venue hire, preparing information packs, stationery, workbooks.

Implementing the workshops: travel and catering costs for the workshop participants, facilitators and guest speakers.

**Follow up:** Writing, printing and distributing report to all participants; evaluation based on feedback forms completed by participants, and advertising the project's achievements to the Somali community through the Somali media in the UK.

## **Workshop Reports**

### **London Borough of Brent, 23-24 January 2010**

The workshop in Brent was held at the Harlesden Stonebridge Hill-side Hub (photos p23).

### **Problems of identity**

Living in Britain, many within both generations face problems of identity – to be British or Somali. There is a clash between traditional

\* Institute of Public Policy Research

Somali and Western values. Young people are sometimes dismissed by the older generation as having little respect for traditional values and behaviour, while the internet-savvy young generation, brought up in Britain, regard the older generation as being out of touch with reality.

The workshop was opened by Osman Jama Ali, Chair of SIDD. It was moderated by Mohamed Mohamud, Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety Practitioner, Amina Khalid, Outreach Associate, Initiatives of Change-UK, and Zahra Hassan, Director of of the Horn, who organised the event.

The agenda for the Brent workshop was put together by a team of young people and adults from the Somali community. The agenda included: dynamic, inter-active and participatory sessions; sharing best practice solutions to intergenerational conflict; and sharing solutions to conflict, based on personal change.

One of the guest speakers was Dawn Butler, MP for Brent South and Minister for Young Citizens and Youth Engagement said: *“Dialogue leading to changes in attitudes among parents and children is vital in achieving unity at home. I was impressed, intrigued and moved by the dialogue that I heard between the old and the young. This is an exciting activity. But inter-generational issues are not unique to the Somali community. They can be found in all communities.*

*“I have done a lot of work with young people. The contribution of the Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy in facilitating this workshop is invaluable. There is a need for parents and children to communicate with each other. They must share life experiences, which will be very different for children who are born here in the UK. War, Tribes, likes and dislikes can consciously and sub-consciously be passed on to new generations. We all need to appreciate and understand the elders’ journey and work together for a more positive and constructive entrepreneurial Somali community. I cannot stress how important these gatherings are and I thank the organisers. We need similar activities, like this, throughout the year.”*

Other guest speakers were Cllr Zaffar Van Kalwala and PC Joanne Campbell from Brent Police.

### **Young People’s Perspectives**

Many of the young people pointed out that there was a breakdown in communication between parents and children due to a lack of a common language to converse with. They pointed out that some



parents did not feel the need to learn the English. Children growing up in Britain gradually lose their mother tongue. The language barrier was one of the main issues of intergenerational conflict identified.

Participants pointed out that Somalis arrive in Britain from a war-torn country. Often mothers and children arrive in a state of emergency. They have little knowledge of the British system. Most Somali parents are used to the idea that children should 'be seen and not heard'; whereas in Britain, children are encouraged to speak about anything and everything. This environment takes power away from parents and makes them feel less in control.

### **Guidance and Counselling**

Parents felt that children in Britain have social services on their side. If children want to move away from home, they have the law to back them up. Sometimes social services do need to step in, but some children take advantage of the situation and threaten parents: "I will call the social services on you."

The participants concluded that children need guidance and counselling from an early age, but there has to be better relationships between parents and children, where they can comfortably discuss problems and come to an agreement before they boil over.

The workshop noted that Somalis experience racism and segregation in many forms. British society classifies them as black; among Africans, they would be Somali. Clan divisions are rife within the Somali community. Young people get caught up in clan prejudices, whether they choose to or not.

Young people pointed out that "parents must learn to mentally unpack", and refrain from repeatedly talking about going back to Somalia or yearning about the past good life. One adult admitted: "We came here thinking that we were going to be here for a little while. We did not think that, 20 years on, Somalia would still be ungovernable and we'd still be here."

To facilitate understanding, the youth felt adults should adapt to life in Britain, where they have been living for a long period of time. Adults need to learn more about the British system. For their part, children should endeavour to learn their mother tongue.

### **Dialogue Starts At Home**

The workshop concluded that dialogue starts at home. There should be honest conversations about life, school, religion, culture and social issues. A lot of issues, such as sex or drugs, are either covered

up as `Xaraan` ('Prohibited' or 'not allowed by the religion') or `Ceeb` ('Shame'), or "Maya" ('No!'), with no explanation given! Leaving such topics only to the school will make the child curious, experiment alone and subject to learning from peers.

Participants pointed out that many families within the Somali community are run by single parents, mainly women. There is a high incidence of poverty among the Somali community. Many families are on income support, barely able to get by. Women participants who spoke shared about the difficulties they face, bringing up children alone by themselves, without the traditional support networks of relatives and friends they were used to in Somalia.

### **Hopelessness**

These situations force some of the young people to seek work and sacrifice their careers. Young people quickly get stuck in syndrome of hopelessness and doing nothing for themselves. Somali adults are afraid of questioning authorities. They readily accept what they are told.

Teaching children traditional, cultural and religious ethics are not the only factors to consider when bringing them up. Parents were urged to undertake `parenthood classes`.

Don de Silva urged participants to mobilise and work together to tackle common problems. He spoke about how leaders like US President Barrack Obama had to overcome tough challenges and obstacles to reach positions of authority. Members of IofC-UK, Peter Riddell and Kojo Jantuah, shared examples of how peace can begin.

## **London Borough of Harrow, 27-28 March 2010 – Report by Ayan Osman**

The workshop was held at the Harrow and Wealdstone Library Centre (photo p32) and was put together by Abdi Gure, a community leader, who leads an innovative mental health project. He was assisted by the project's coordinators, Amina Khalid, Outreach Associate, Initiatives of Change, and Zahra Hassan, Director of Women of the Horn. Mohamed Mohamud; an Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety Practitioner, moderated the sessions. Don de Silva presented the impact of IofC in the UK and the world.

The workshop was attended by over 70 members of the older and younger generations of the Somali community in Harrow. The aim was spontaneously described by one participant as "helping individuals and families to counter the climate of blame and selfishness with

a culture of care and personal responsibility” and contributing to “rebuilding a sense of community and hope and tackling the cause of racial and communal discrimination.”

The workshop opened with a prayer to bring the group unity and run its course smoothly. The facilitators stressed the importance of letting everyone express their opinions without discrimination and focus on the issues at hand.

Osman Jama Ali, Chair of SIDD, long-time Minister and former Deputy Prime Minister of the Transitional Government of Somalia opened the meeting. Commenting on the situation in Somalia, he apologized for the mistakes made by the government during his time, which led to the current situation in the country. Several community leaders welcomed the apology and urged him and SIDD to continue to work to bring unity and healing among the Somali diaspora.

### **Working Sessions**

During the workshop, participants broke into several working sessions to discuss intergenerational conflict. Afterwards they reported their discussions to the whole workshop. Reporting back from the working sessions, many highlighted the lack of communication between parents and children within Somali families. Some children, caught up in new ways of thinking, demanded greater freedom of thought and action. Some parents had difficulties with adapting to British culture, despite living in the country for many years. For them, ‘home’ was still Somalia.

Young people called on parents to attend parenting classes. Young women in the workshop said that “conversations” with parents flowed only in one direction – from parents to children. Parents spoke down to children and asserted their authority, often using religious texts. They expected children to obey what was told without question.

All participants agreed that there wasn’t enough ‘family time’ spent within each household. Parents were ‘blissfully unaware’ of what their children were up to within and outside school. Parents need to get involved within the education of their children and help and encourage children to better themselves. This involved taking care to choose the right schools for their children.

All participants agreed that expressing unconditional love for children was not something that was done within the Somali

community and that this attitude needed to change. In some families, children could feel neglected and unloved. Some of the young people felt that they were under pressure from parents to do well, without being given proper support or guidance. Fathers set aside clan differences to discuss what is best for their children.

The meeting discussed the impact of chewing “Khat” on Somali families. Khat has been targeted by anti-drug organizations. It is a controlled or illegal substance in many countries, but is legal for sale in Britain. Many participants pointed out that some Somali fathers empty their pay-packets in the khat cafes, socialising with their friends, rather than being at home. Without the support of fathers, mothers are forced to work as cleaners or cooks to find the money to keep the family going. Young people, and some women, are now picking up the habit.

### **Better understanding of religion and culture**

Clan and tribal attitudes were identified as being among the major causes of violent attacks within the Somali community. Parents passed on their prejudices to young people.

Learning about identity and culture could help young people to live and work together in diverse communities. It could also help them develop their identity and sense of belonging which are fundamental to personal well-being and the achievements of a flourishing and cohesive society.

Young people need to be helped to develop the ability to see themselves as part of British society, and to critically reflect on who they are. One young person said: “In the house you’re Somali, in school you’re English, sometimes classed as black. Among the black people, we are classified as Somali. And some parts of the media call us ‘pirates’.”

Parents pointed out that not all the old ways were bad. Some traditional values, such as caring for elders and the community spirit of helping each other could assist young people to negotiate the challenges of living in Britain.

### **Recommendations on Ways Forward**

- All participants agreed that personal transformation was the key to creating peace at home and in society. “Before we can change anything, we have to change ourselves” was echoed by all. Parents needed to cut down their addiction to khat and spend the time and money saved for the benefit of families. Parents should attend parenting classes.
- All participants agreed that there wasn’t enough ‘family time’

spent within each household. All members of the community should get involved in community projects. Somalis tend to exclude themselves from the other cultures and races. This needed to be stopped, especially when living in a multicultural society.

- Somali community organizations should hold regular events and field trips for parents and children to enjoy together.
- Young and old should take full advantage of the education opportunities available in Britain.
- The Quran states that Allah created nations and tribes for identification only and not to despise each other. SIDD has a major role to play in promoting peace and reconciliation among the Somali community and should establish a regular series of events to bring people together.

### **Sample of feedback from participants:**

One parent said: *'Speaking as a father, I came with some baggage and reservations to this workshop. I thought that mothers and children point the finger at the fathers only. During the workshop, we had honest dialogue. I realize now that I need to change my attitudes towards my children, to take time to be with them and listen to what they say.'*

A woman community leader called for unity within the community. Another participant said that uniting as a nation or on the basis of sound religious values was far better than joining clans.

Report by Ayan Osman

### **London Borough of Islington, 24-25th April**

Intergenerational dialogue was at the heart of an innovative two-day workshop for the Somali community at the Andover Community Centre in Islington. (photos p36)

Entitled *Peace Begins at Home*, it was organised by Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD) with the mission of identifying the conflicts that exist between the younger and older generations of the Somali community and providing a platform for dialogue. During the two days, over 50 members of the Somali community attended. The senior participants included former diplomats, lecturers, and ministers of the Somali government, whilst the younger participants were mostly students, graduates and junior community leaders.

The workshop was organized by Amina Khalid, SIDD member and Outreach Associate of Initiatives of Change (IofC), who, with Mohamed Sheikh Mohamud, Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety Practitioner, Zahra Hassan, Director of Women of the Horn, facilitated the sessions.

### **‘Parents don’t listen and children don’t respect’**

Mohamed Sheikh Mohamud explained that “There is a communication problem between the younger and older Somali generation: young people feel that parents don’t listen to them, and parents feel that their children do not respect them.” The aim of the workshop was “to find out if these issues do exist – and if so, to facilitate these problems through intergenerational dialogue.”

Intergenerational conflict is not a new issue nor is it an issue found only in the Somali community. Amina Khalid stated that, although Somalis had experienced conflict in Somalia with civil war and the breakdown of the nation, intergenerational conflict had never before been a real issue. She said, “Intergenerational conflict is a different kind of conflict which has been created by a change in customs, culture, religion and language. If not dealt with, it could lead to bigger problems for the Somali community in Britain.”

Osman Jama Ali, Chair of SIDD and former Deputy Prime Minister of the Transitional National Government of Somalia, also spoke at the opening of the workshop. As a key figure of the former Somali government under Siad Barre, he admitted that mistakes were made and apologized for them. He emphasized the need for the Somali community to engage in dialogue and work with each other, regardless of which clan they came from, in order to build peace and stability in Somalia. Peace, he stressed, needs to come first from the family structure before it can be generated to a national level.

### **Differing Perspectives On Respect, Religion and Culture**

After setting out the workshop’s programme, the facilitators asked the younger and older Somalis to separate into different groups, and to identify what conflicts existed between the two generations and to report their findings later to the other group.

It was evident that young Somalis have very different concerns from those of the older generation. Many expressed that their parents did not trust them, particularly when they wanted to socialize with their friends. Also that parents did not socialize or converse enough with their children. Ineffective communication was also a cause of conflict with many feeling that their parents talked at rather than to them.



On the other hand, older participants felt that their children did not respect them or listen to them. Religion and culture was also a concern, they felt that their British born and bred children lose sense of their Somali roots and are quick to embrace British culture and Western behaviour.

This belief was met with a strong reaction by the young participants; they stated that whilst being British was part of their identity, they also maintained their Somali and Muslim identities. One young participant stated that while most young people's hearts are in Britain, their parents' hearts are 'back home' and this is why they fail to embrace British culture.

Language was another hotly debated issue. Young Somalis insisted that the older generation needed to take steps to learn English so they can communicate better with their children and the outside world, whilst the parents felt that the children ought to learn, or improve their use of, their mother tongue.

### **Finding solutions**

Next, the participants were asked to provide solutions for the issues they had identified. Participants from both generations agreed that they both needed to be more pro-active in conversing with, and really listening to each other in order to build trust. Older participants accepted the younger Somalis' call to accept challenges and be more flexible and more tolerant towards them. They also decided to be responsible for teaching their children the value of the Somali language and making sure they don't lose their mother tongue.

Meanwhile, the younger participants determined that they would be more understanding of the traumas their parents survived which often still affects their outlook and approach to life.

For many of the participants, this exercise was a novel and eye-opening experience. For some young Somalis, this was the longest time they had ever engaged with older members of the community. One student exclaimed that she "couldn't believe parents and young people were actually in a room together integrating and exploring solutions to inter-generational conflicts."

### **Guest speakers**

During the first day a panel of guest speakers contributed to the programme. Jeremy Corbyn, Labour MP for Islington North, took time off from his busy pre-election schedule. He said the Somali community had given him "education, friendship and support" and praised the way they have coped with their trauma. He urged the Somali com-

munity to challenge the negative portrayals of Somali people in the British media as he sees an “aspiring and hardworking community”.

Lela Kogbara, Director of Strategy and Partnership for Islington Council, suggested that the experience of not belonging is not always negative. In her view “strengths are weaknesses and weaknesses are strengths” and she encouraged the senior participants to refrain from moulding their children to their own idealistic models, but instead to support them in being the best at what they choose to do.

Adam Dirir, editor of *Somali Eye* magazine noted that with “14 Somali Councillors in Britain and 1 mayor in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, the Somali community is slowly coming towards success.” Sheikh Ibrahim Muse, a Somali Islamic scholar spoke about the role of Islam in fostering relationships between parents and children and recited verses from the Qur’an that stress the importance of parents communicating with their children and cultivating friendships with them.

### **Day Two: Inspiring Stories**

The second day also started with guest speakers. Omar Said Abasheikh, a Somali barrister spoke of his journey from struggling at school throughout most of his early education to achieving a career in law. Jim Baynard-Smith, a senior IofC member, shared a moving account of how engaging in open and honest dialogue with a close family member had helped him resolve personal conflicts. Jim told the participants, “Honest conversation may be difficult but it may save your life.” Don de Silva briefed the workshop about the unique nature and objectives of the organisation.

Ismail Osman Adam, a young poet recited a poem about the need for unity amongst members of the Somali community and the necessity to listen to one another and work together in order to rebuild broken relations. Later in the day, Amina Khalid recited one of her poems about the difficult journey that many Somalis had to take during the war, leaving their homeland for a foreign land with a different people, language and culture. The poem stirred memories in many of the older participants who were visibly moved.

The workshop concluded with the participants being given certificates of attendance by SIDD’s Chair, Osman Jama Ali, as well as other senior members of Initiatives of Change. The workshop was recorded and aired by Universal TV, the largest global Somali satellite channel.

Idil Ahmed, a young Somali said “*Usually parents and children do*

*not integrate in these kinds of contexts, so it was wonderful to actually engage in honest dialogue with one another.”*

*Maryan Ali Mudde, a senior participant said ‘What has happened today is something brilliant for the Somali community. It is a young person who has thought of the concept of this workshop and young people have important perspectives which we would never have heard before a workshop like this.’*

Report by Dahirah Khalid

### **Report – Beyond Tribalism to United Action – Osman Jama Ali and Amb. Mohamed Sharif Mohamud in conversation with young people, 24 May 2012**

What can young people do to tackle tribalism, which is dividing Somalia? This was one of the central themes of discussion at a lively interaction between young members of the Somali diaspora in London with Osman Jama Ali, former Deputy Prime Minister in the Transitional National Government of Somalia, and currently Chair of the Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD) and Ambassador Mohamed Sharif Mohamud, former Director General of the Somali Foreign Ministry and Vice Chair of SIDD.

The event was held at the London headquarters of Initiatives of Change (IofC) UK on 17 May and was mobilized by Guled Osman a Somali Youth Leader and his team. The forum was chaired by Don de Silva.

Mr Osman Jama Ali urged the young Somalis to fight against tribalism and to revive Somali nationalism, so that the unity of the Somali people could be restored again. He encouraged them to mobilize themselves. He urged the young not to follow past mistakes – many government decisions, which were based on clan-based politics. He expressed his willingness to guide the youth and give them the benefit of this experience.

Ambassador Sharif reminded the youth they were the future of Somalia and would determine the course of history. He gave the example of the Somali Youth League, which mobilized trade unions, led the fight against Italian colonialists, and fought and won independence.

According to Ambassador Sharif, initially in Somalia there was peace and harmony, freedom of the press and a democratic society. The

Cold War led to change of regime and rise of violence, culminating in the military's stand against the legitimacy of the government. When Somalia was subject to the military, they used an iron grip to suffocate the freedoms of the people. Power became monopolized in the hands of a few. The lack of representation, lack of progress and the need for change, led to the upsurge, which resulted in the destruction of Somalia.

Ambassador Sharif stated that youth have the power and education to change history. They need only believe in themselves, challenge tribalism and believe in their country. Somalia has oil, minerals, agriculture, eight million hectares to cultivate, two rivers and is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of natural resources. It boasts one of the longest coasts in the world with the most expensive fish which are plundered. The coast of Somalia is rich in oil. Somalia only lacks an enlightened government who cares about the people. Ambassador Sharif encouraged the youth to think, plan and be positive about the future.

What can youth do to tackle tribalism? Don de Silva circulated around the room, encouraging young participants to ask questions or make comments. Each one responded to this on-the-spot request with intelligence, integrity and a sense of commitment.

One participant asked what the youth could do about tribalism dividing the country. Mr Osman Jama Ali commented that Somalis shared a common language, culture and religion. *'Pioneers are needed to facilitate national activities, with support from the international community and Somali diaspora through the transfer of knowledge'*, he added.

Another young speaker questioned how Somalis could create a one government, one nation, and one country. Ambassador Sharif responded: *'Eradication of tribalism is up to each and every Somali. Somalis must work together to create an inclusive political system representative of all ethnic groups, where the government rules by law and treats citizens equally, working for the common interest of all Somalis. Organization and education are power; the future is bright and realizable, if Somalis can grasp the opportunity.'*

By Anita Amendra, Project Manager, IofC UK



LETTER - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN  
Initiatives of Change IofC UK  
AND  
Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is hereby made and entered into by and between the Initiatives of Change UK, hereinafter referred to as IofC UK, and the Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy, hereinafter referred to as SIDD.

**It is agreed as follows:**

1. **Purpose:** IofC UK and SIDD, whilst recognising the integrity and policies of each other, agree to work together in a spirit of partnership to further the aims and objectives that complement each other:

- IofC UK: *"Has an effective track record of working to build bridges across Britain's divides within communities, faiths, industry, and leadership.*

*"The IofC-UK community, which is based through the country and comes from all walks of life, is deeply committed to changing society through inspiring changes in people's hearts, minds and lives by encouraging the inner search for truth, meaning and purpose."*

- SIDD: *"To promote national and international conflict resolution and reconciliation with a view to relieving suffering, poverty and distress, and building and maintaining social cohesion and trust among Somalis and between Somalis and neighbouring communities, in the UK.*

SIDD and IofC UK will work together to facilitate and empower the capacities of the Somali Diaspora in the UK to lead in promoting trust building, based on the principles of IofC: beginning with personal change.

SIDD's on-going contribution to the work of IofC community is greatly valued.

**Clauses specific to the agreement**

2. **Hosting:** IofC UK agrees to provide a desk and a workstation to accommodate SIDD at 24 Greencoat Place. IofC UK will create a IT user account for SIDD.
3. **Hosting:** IofC UK agrees to support a volunteer to work with joint SIDD and IofC UK activities. The volunteer will be managed by SIDD. IofC UK will provide reasonable travel costs and lunch expenses, if lunch is not available at 24 Greencoat Place, upon provision of receipts.
4. **Hosting:** IofC UK agrees to let SIDD use the conference and venue facilities at 24 Greencoat Place. However, the use of the facilities needs to be booked in advance and in agreement with the IofC UK administration.
5. **Expertise:** SIDD will provide expertise to organise events, programmes and projects to further IofC principles in the Somali community on a voluntary basis. SIDD representatives are welcome to participate in IofC UK meetings and events on a voluntary basis.

6. **Fund-raising:** SIDD will commit to fund-raise, on its own, or jointly with lofC UK, to implement common activities.
7. **Security:** SIDD agrees to keep all the facilities in Greencoat Place secure and tidy.

End of specific clauses


8. **Disputes:** If any dispute or difference cannot be resolved between the Parties by active, open and good faith discussion, the Parties will enter into mediation. However, this MOU may be terminated immediately by either party should this Memorandum be seriously breached.
9. **Term:** This MoU commences on the date signed by both Parties and will continue until terminated by either of the Parties. The terminating party will give as much notice as possible.
10. **Review:** The Parties will meet to review the operation of this MoU every six months after signature, and at least every year after that.

### Partnership Values


The Parties agree to:

- Work as a team.
- Support each other in finding the most efficient ways to deliver events, programmes and projects.
- Be open, frank, honest and constructive in all dealings with each other.
- Share work equitably and reasonably, consistent with agreed arrangements.
- Use this MoU as a benchmark against which each Party, and the Team as a whole, facilitates positive action within the Somali Diaspora..

#### Signed on behalf of lofC UK:

Signature:   
 Name: FRANCIS EVANS  
 Position: TRUSTEE  
 Date: 30 September 2010

#### Signed on behalf of SIDD

Signature:   
 Name: OSMAN JAMA ALI  
 Position: CHAIR  
 Date: 30.09.10



**Speech – Osman Jama Ali, on behalf the global Somali diaspora, at the ‘Vision 2016’ National Conference, Mogadishu, 1st September 2013 (English translation)**

*Greetings to all, especially to the President, the deputy Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and UN Special Representative Nicholas Kay.*

*I have to accept that I am not young – I am 75 years old. I used to hide two or three years, but now I have to tell the truth! I want to speak about our history and what I went through. I am not interested in a position, and I cannot handle a new job. What I can do is to tell you the truth about what went wrong, exactly what happened. Why do we learn history? In order not to repeat the past mistakes. I have to tell my children where the ‘mines’ are hidden.*

*We have to apologise and ask forgiveness, because we were part of the problem. I am one of those who failed the Somali people, and we have to accept our failure. Instead of making a just distribution of resources and jobs, we turned to corruption and nepotism.*

*I was a member of the regime and also a member of the opposition. I know the mistakes of both sides. I know exactly how the statelessness came. I know when the government of Siad Barre was right, and when it went wrong and became clannish. The nepotism and corruption started when we started the war with Ethiopia. We started to send the officers of certain clans to the front, while keeping the officers from certain clans back at base. The regime imprisoned some officers, and promoted others from favoured clans. Some of the imprisoned officers were sent to the front. The regime lost the trust of many people when they saw such nepotism, promoting certain officers because of their clan, or giving bank credits to certain businessmen.*

*Unfortunately, in reaction to our wrongs, the organisations which were fighting the regime were set up on a clan basis. Most of them used the name ‘Somali’, but they were representing clans – Somali National Movement, Somali Salvation Democratic Front, United Somali Congress. The only opposition group which openly said the name of their clan was the Rahanweyn Resistance Army.*

*Today I see a great hope and I congratulate this government headed by President Hassan Sheikh. I feel that the way the President is running his administration is very different from what we used to do. When Tarzan (the Mayor of Mogadishu) speaks, I know exactly what he intends. I appeal to him to return the properties of the Benadir people, which were taken and occupied by armed people, to their*

rightful owners. For example the houses of Sharif Abow are well-known, and should be returned to his family. We are very grateful for the way you are working, and the way you are expressing the national views. We elders are ready to give advice, but not to take political positions.

Europe came through what we have experienced in two world wars. The European diaspora in America rebuilt Europe after the Second World War through the Marshall Plan, so the Somali diaspora should undertake this role too. Instead of fighting the Ethiopians and Kenyans, there should be peaceful cooperation and open borders, just like there is in Europe.

Those who want to divide Somalia into different states must know that the size of population is an asset. China is a good example: it will overtake the United States economically by 2020 because of the size of its population. If China just fasts for one day, they could give billions to charities! We are in a strategic position internationally, and we are only 10 million people with oil, gas and other mineral resources, marine resources, agriculture and livestock. Yet we are dividing this small country and population into even smaller 'lands' (an English word) – Somaliland, Puntland, Jubbaland – maybe we will see 'Afgoyeland'! The name Somaliland should include the whole Somali Republic. Mogadishu should be part of Somaliland! Kismayo also!

The European countries which divided Somalia are now becoming one, and the whole world is becoming one, a global village. How can I take scissors and cut the Somali Republic into so many 'lands'? Stop creating so many 'lands' – let's unite on justice and democracy! There are different ways people unite and organise society. There are five stages in which human beings organise themselves: the first, and most primitive is by clan-based allegiance, the second is geography-based (eg by region), third is profession-based (eg teachers, engineers), the fourth is religion-based and the highest one is ideology-based (political parties). Luckily, we are all from the same religion, there are no seas or mountains to divide us. Allah united us in all aspects, so there is no space for division.

## **Report – Peace Begins at Home – Intergenerational Dialogue Workshops in Hackney and Tottenham, August 2013-March 2014 (photos p35)**

### **Towards improving relations between older and younger generations in London**

The *Peace Begins at Home* (PBH) Intergenerational Dialogue workshops were originally developed to improve communications between the generations in the Somali community and were delivered in three London boroughs in 2010. When the summer 2011 riots broke out, SIDD Trustee Amina Khalid realised that there was a breakdown in communication between the generations in the wider society, and that the Somali community could offer a response.

Applications for funding to both the Awards for All Big Lottery Fund and the Irene Prestwich Trust led to grants totalling £10,000, and between August 2013 and March 2014, two PBH weekend workshops and subsequent follow-up sessions took place in Haringey, where the riots started, and in neighbouring Hackney.

The project was organised by SIDD in partnership with AfR, and the project was managed by Amina Khalid in collaboration with Don de Silva and Peter Riddell. A particular challenge of these workshops was to identify partner organisations in two boroughs in which neither SIDD nor lofC had done any previous work. This required many visits by the Project Manager to the two boroughs.

A total of 70 people attended the two workshops, approximately half older and half younger, and from different ethnic, religious and social background. With the help of distinguished representatives of the community, and examples of reconciliation whether in person or on film, an atmosphere was created in which younger and older could express their concerns and grievances, and they could sit down together to work out solutions.

Osman Jama Ali, SIDD Chairman, opening one of the workshops said, ‘I believe that these workshops indicate a new confidence in the Somali community, that we do have something to contribute to this society’.

A detailed report of the workshops has been published, and Awards for All signed off on the accounts.

## **Workshop programme**

- The workshop begins with introductions, and perhaps a film clip, a song or an ice-breaker
- Selected individuals share personal examples of reconciliation across the generational divide
- Older and younger participants meet separately to formulate the concerns they most wish to express to the other generation
- The concerns are presented to the whole group and are tabled on a flip-chart or 'sticky wall'
- In discussion with the participants, they are reduced to four or five Key Issues
- Local political and community leaders are invited to listen to the presentation of the issues and to comment on them
- Mixed-generation groups are then formed around Ways of Resolving Key Issues to discuss and make Recommendations, which are again presented
- The last phase is for the mixed generation groups to reform around the same issues, this time to discuss what Practical Steps individuals or groups would like to take
- In the final session, the whole group is invited to express what they have learnt from the workshop
- Feedback forms are filled in and farewells said.

A one-day follow-up workshop is organised after a few weeks to deepen the impact and to discuss next steps.

## **Testimonies**

A young woman said: *"I [used to be] almost scared to have my say at home with the family... I have learned from my participation that I need to talk honestly to my parents and stop being angry at them. I now see that my problems are not different than those of others."*

A young woman of Asian background shared that it was the first time she had had a conversation with an older white man. She had feared that they would have a negative image of young people like her, and had never imagined it would be possible.

Another young participant said, *"It is not only our parents that need to change their mindset, but we do too. We must not blame but help them to find solutions together."*

A Bangladeshi participant: *“I want this for my community... we don’t have such an initiative in place yet, and we need to understand and appreciate each other”*.

Ali Ozbek, Board member of the Kurdish Centre in Haringey (where the workshop took place) said, *“This kind of educational programme will encourage our children to succeed in their future. This is the first step for us to integrate into the community where we live. I am so happy that this has taken place in the Kurdish Centre. We need it too!”*

An older participant said, *“A wonderful day! I wasn’t expecting the younger generation to break the barrier between young and old. It is really good to talk together.”*

### **Evaluation by local political and civic leaders**

One of the most striking features of the workshops was the importance local political and civic leaders attached to them.

Meg Hillier MP (Hackney South and Shoreditch) (photo p34) welcomed the initiative. She believed that Hackney citizens are very tolerant, but not necessarily very interested in each other. She said, *“We tolerate but are we interested to understand each other? Perhaps the greatest value of inter-generational dialogue is to open our minds to inter-cultural dialogue”*. Cllr Michael Desmond, Speaker of Hackney Borough Council, said *“We shouldn’t give up on young people who have made errors or done things wrong. There is always the opportunity that people can find redemption and learn from their mistakes.”*

Haringey Mayor Cllr Sheila Peacock (photo p35) was very interested to know how such a varied group had been brought together. After questions and responses from the participants, she said she was *“overwhelmed”*. *“I have learnt so much. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.”* She called for a continuation of the project.

Others who attended were Cllr Catherine West, former Leader of Islington Council and Labour Party parliamentary candidate for Hornsey and Woodgreen, who was representing the Haringey MP David Lammy, and Cllr Lorna Reith of Tottenham Hale.

### **Other Guests of Honour**

Dr Yusuf Ali, President of the Anglo-Somali Society, Vicky Morton from the Parish Council of St Michael and All Angels Church, London Fields, and SIDD Trustee Dr Muna Ismail, a research scientist, Kojo Jantuah, a life-coach, Howard Grace, a film-maker and retired



teacher, Michael Lilley, founder of *My Time* a mental health counselling service, Jim Baynard-Smith, SIDD Senior Adviser, and Lul Seyoum, Director of the International Centre for Eritrean Refugees and Asylum Seekers (ICERAS).

### **Next steps**

There have been numerous invitations for PBH from individuals and community groups both in London and in other cities, including Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham and Bristol, for which funding applications were subsequently prepared.

### **Identification and Response of Key Factors affecting relationships between older and younger generations**

#### **Next steps**

Several groups in England have requested for *Peace Begins at Home* workshops, including the United Estates of Wythenshawe women's group in Manchester, Bringing People Together community group at St Anne's and Radford in Nottingham; Muslim Hands in Birmingham, and representatives of the Filipino, Ethiopian, Afghan, Bangladeshi and Kurdish communities.

Report by Amina Khalid and Peter Riddell

CONCERNING INDIVIDUALS	RECOMMENDATIONS/SOLUTIONS
Identity crisis	Raising self-esteem - setting up confidence for women
Anger management issues	A 'Getting to know your neighbour' programme
Fear of loosing...	Self education- read more, becoming proactive
Cultural similarities/differences of the country of origin and host	Seek help and find time
Self-absorption (pressure on the individual)	Take parenting courses
Sharing of personal journeys with others	RECOMMENDATIONS/SOLUTIONS
CONCERNING FAMILY	Create space to know about other people's culture and tradition
Parental integration	Families to create time for dialogue and honest conversation
Lack of understanding between different generations	Make best use of resources available to bring communities together
Stereotypes between communities	A platform to learn together through home education and humour
Understanding each other's language	Be more creative
Family – husband v wife	Rewarding and encouraging good behaviour through positive reinforcement
1) Boundaries and limits for the child 2) Giving praise for good behaviour	Set ground rules by value examples 0-7 = LOVE 7-14 = TEACH 14-21 = BE FRIEND
Communication breakdown	Appreciation of each other's knowledge and understanding
Different understanding of hierarchy within the family	Clearer communication with full explanations of decisions taken by both generations
Child disciplinary practice	
Lack of time within families	
Lack of confidence with your parents	
Lack of Parental input	
Lack of quality time to connect thoughts and ideas	

CONCERNING SOCIETY	RECOMMENDATIONS/SOLUTIONS
Political manipulation to divide and control	Government policies to focus more on prevention rather cure
More workshops for parents and children	Media to play a more encouraging role to support families
More visibility from grassroot community	Teachers to work more closely with families to support children
School responsibility to educate children on diversity	Providing effective platform to highlight issues or problems affecting communities
Lack of adaptation to a changing landscape (social, emotional, financial needs and expectations)	Don't look for a role model – be the role model Society to set an example
Technology impact on family	More programmes and schemes to support hard to reach families
Generational gap	Political awareness and collective action against bad policies
Lack of perspective in terms of the parent/child “NEW” Life in the WEST	Organising multicultural awareness in the community
Media perceptions of migrant communities	Society to focus more on the importance of family life and parental education
Lack of policy to support family unity	To be more tolerant and friendly
Less focus on prevention and more focused on cure	

**Speech by Osman Jama Ali, former Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia, at the ‘Making Democracy Real’ Dialogue, at IofC-India, Asia Plateau, Panchgani, Maharashtra, India, 11th January 2014**

*It is a great pleasure to be in India for the first time.*

*When I was at school in northern Somalia in the 1950s, before Independence, I remember that we had Indian teachers not only teaching us Maths and Science, but giving us inspiration about liberation and freedom, and the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.*

*I am also very pleased to be at the Initiatives of Change centre in India. I owe IofC a great deal. When my country collapsed in civil*

*war in 1991, and I was granted political asylum in Britain, I was a lost man. It was lofC friends who helped me find my way and see how to make a contribution to the recovery of my country.*

*The title 'Making Democracy Real' is very important and very touching, especially to those who have experienced dictatorship. I have to constantly apologise for being one of a generation of politicians who failed Somalia. People like me were saying we were democrats, but we were actually acting like dictators.*

*The theme today is about how enmity and division damage democracy, and how dialogue and reconciliation are essential foundations for building and sustaining democracy.*

*For lessons in this, I have only to look at the recent history of Somalia.*

*In our first parliament after Independence in 1960, there were on 3 out of 123 MPs who had a university degree. The rest did not even have primary or secondary education. None of them had any knowledge at all about administration and governance. Looking back, there was no way that that government could have succeeded.*

*Weak rule led to the military take-over in a coup. At the beginning there was optimism. Many educated people returned from abroad to help the military government, and some progress was made in development during the first years.*

*But after a while, suspicion and mistrust began to set in. Clan rivalry was the root of it. It became particularly evident when the war with Ethiopia started in 1977. I remember that officers of some clans, who were in prison, were released to serve on the front line, while officers of other clans were kept in reserve and promoted. I was a member of that government, and I was aware of it, but I could do nothing.*

*Corruption and nepotism set in. Bank credits were given to people of some clans and not to others. Jobs were given to some, and not to others. Mistrust and suspicion led to dictatorship. Armed clan-based opposition groups formed with the support of Mengistu, the military ruler of Ethiopia. At the same time, Siad Barre's government was supporting the armed opposition to Mengistu's government.*

*When Siad Barre's government collapsed in 1991, the opposition groups were so divided that they could not form a national government, and in fact, they fought against each other.*

*Since then the Somali people have suffered over 20 years of stateless-*

*ness: no government, no security, no development. The country was dominated by clan war-lords who competed for territory.*

*It has been a long walk back from statelessness to the situation where there is a new government and parliament supported by the Somalis and by the international community. But even now there are areas of the country which are not yet within its control.*

*During these years, there have been numerous conferences to reconcile Somalis, but always organised by others and always outside Somalia.*

*The first credible reconciliation conference was taken by the Djiboutian government in the year 2000. The majority of Somalis accepted that government of which I was a member. But, after several months, a clash between the Prime Minister and the President paralysed the government. In addition, there were warlords who refused to cooperate, and there was little financial assistance from other countries, so the government did not have the resources to impose its authority even over the whole capital.*

*There have been other significant steps along the way, with conferences in Nairobi in 2004 and later in Djibouti in 2008, which produced transitional governments. These governments functioned to a certain degree, but again many factions refused to take part, and they received no real support from the International Community.*

*But the present government, now just over a year old, was the first one to be created inside Somalia, and was engineered by Somali elders and chiefs. This is the first government to have the whole-hearted support of the International Community. Major international conferences were organised for Somalia by the United Kingdom, the Turkish government and the European Union, and many other governments are assisting both financially and in practical ways.*

*I would like to express my gratitude to those countries which have supported the Somalis over these 20 years to help us reach this point.*

*It is on a non-political basis that I and others have been working in the Somali community in the UK, which is the biggest Somali community in the world outside Somalia.*

*After I resigned from the Transitional Government in 2003, I realised that there was a need to build trust between the different Somali communities in the UK which had brought all their divisions from Somalia.*



*With the support of IofC, we brought together a number of leaders of Somali communities and created an organisation, Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy, in 2005. Since then, we have organised many initiatives in this direction.*

*We organised courses in Dialogue Facilitation and workshops in Intergenerational Dialogue, and numerous events to bring these people together. IofC conferences in the UK and Caux in Switzerland have been helped to break down barriers between us. A number of those who have been part of these activities are now playing significant roles in the new process in Mogadishu.*

*I believe this approach of trust-building is an essential part of the cure for all those who are in despair of finding just governance and democracy. It is good for the whole world, and especially for the developing countries which are sick from bad governance and which are seeking ways to recover.*

*We here, from the Greater Horn of Africa – which includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, as well as Somalia – are here to ask for the assistance of IofC in India and elsewhere in the recovery of the our region.*

*I congratulate all those who have organised and who are taking part in this important and useful conference. Thank you for welcoming and hosting us.*

## **Report – Nabad Curiye (peace creators) training in Dialogue Facilitation – August–October 2014** (photo p35)

### **Background**

Nabad Curiye is an initiative that developed within SIDD (Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy) and which focuses on training professionals, intellectuals, religious and community leaders in UK's Somali Diaspora to become skilled dialogue facilitators for the reconciliation of their community in the UK and in Somalia. This will enable them to create peace in the Somali society where trust between communities has broken down and social harmony destroyed as a result of two decades of civil conflict in Somalia. The dialogue facilitators or 'Nabad Curiye' will organise dialogues between conflicting groups and individuals throughout the country, they will also deliver similar training in the different regions they represent. They will be available to be called on to facilitate structured dialogues, whether at the request of neighbourhoods, or of local or

national government anywhere in the country. They will bring together representatives of the different parties to a conflict, and help them to solve their problems through dialogue – where possible, leading to genuine reconciliation.

### **Reasons**

The purpose of the work of the Nabad Curiye programme is to build durable peace among Somali communities, remove barriers dividing people, and restore the harmony and trust of Somali people once again. Dialogue facilitation programme by Nabad Curiye aims to help initiate peace and reconciliation programmes that start from grassroots and progress upward to national level, with the dream of making Somalia a peaceful and a developed nation.

### **Steering group**

The Steering Group of Nabad Curiye consists of 7 individuals who are all members of IofC's AfR (Agenda for Reconciliation) and coordinated by a team of Somalis. The Steering Group was instrumental in putting together the launch of the programme and the subsequent selections of the participants based on their applications for the course.

The Steering Group put in place a process that enabled seamless steps of actions towards the training of the first cohort of Nabad Curiye at Greencoat place. The steps taken to make this a reality are as follows:

### **Introductory day**

On 18 August 2013 the programme was launched at IofC-UK's centre at Greencoat Place. More than 60 guests in all walks of life from the Somali Diaspora communities across the UK. It was very interactive day with the participants who in the end were asked to fill in an application form if they wished to attend the training workshops for dialogue facilitation. Peter Riddell presented 'For the Love of Tomorrow' film as part of the discussion.

### **Call for applications and selection process**

Most of the participants took their questionnaires for the application of the course and sent them back within 7 days. 22 applications were received i.e. 1/3 of the number who participated the launch day. The selection process was carried out by the steering committee. 17 applicants from different Somali clan families in different UK cities were selected based on the merits of their responses to the questionnaires on the application.

## **Course design and content**

The course was designed Phoebe Gill and Lawrence Fearon to follow a series of steps, starting with more formal taught sessions covering the basic principles of peace, exploring the dynamics of internal and external peace, and relating this to Frank Buchman's methodology of listening. The course then transitions from taught sessions to dialogue practice and experiential learning.

Sessions start with dialogue concepts, exploration of peace, listening levels, facilitation processes, exploring our deepest selves in order to work together, exploring our perceptions and assumptions, practicing dialogue, understanding forgiveness and reconciliation. The course used lofC films as part of its content. The co-trainers Phoebe Gill and Lawrence Fearon have worked together for over 10 years and have journeyed together exploring the concepts of perception, difference and finding commonality.

## **Awards ceremony**

On November 2 an award ceremony was held at lofC-UK offices at Greencoat for the group having finalised 6 weeks of training. It was chaired by Lul Seyoum, founder and director of ICERAS (International Centre for Eritrean Refugees and Asylum Seekers). 14 participants gave their personal testimonies about the course and the process they went through since the start of the programme. Extracts from their testimonies show that all have learnt and benefited from the course and most wish to have an advance course to cap what they have been taught. The day included a presentation of the film 'The Imam and the Pastor' and a subsequent discussion led by Peter Riddell on the importance of trust-building. There was also an inspirational speech by Don de Silva about the importance of individuals taking initiative to make a difference.

## **Testimonies by participants**

*I learned... that there are questions you can ask and there are questions you can't ask. You can ask questions to seek the truth, but you can't ask questions that create conflict... that there is a difference between dialogue and debate... that you must start with inner peace, then in the family, the nation, the region.*

Abade Mohamed Ahmed

*I learned... what is inner peace – that it is the key to life. We need more materials about dialogue.*

Abdirahman M Abtidon

*I have learned what peace and trust-building initiatives among oth-*

*ers, I learned the best way to facilitate a peace dialogue is having inner peace and ability of listening. I would like to see more female participants on the next training. I would like to thank Initiative of Change, Somali Initiative of Dialogue and Democracy, our project leaders, Muna, Asha, Omar and our wonderful trainers Phoebe and Lawrence.*

Lajeel Moalim Abdirahman

*I learned... that Somali people are not good listeners... about attentive listening and different kinds of listening. I learned... the difference between debate (which is to win points), and dialogue (which aims to find common ground). I learned... that good facilitators don't bring their fears or worries into the dialogue.*

Hassan Nur Ali

*I learned.... that the victim has to go towards the victor to rebuild trust.*

Yasin Abdi Id

*It is special gathering because it is came together by individuals equipped with knowledge and skills to reconcile people divided by conflict, their trainers and those made happen the course we took. Also because you, Nabad-Curiye group are going to do one of the most important human causes, which is making peace among people.*

*The skills we have been taught can get them out of the dark side of life when we lead them towards the right direction, teach them the importance of peace and living together in harmony. They really need honest and skilled people who can remove barriers dividing them, bring them together and help them to trust each other once again.*

Omar Dini

*I learned.... that it is very important to go through to applying this in Somalia to get peace... I learned.... that the way we can solve our problems is through dialogue, debate and peace.*

*I learned [the difference between] debate and dialogue a word or two which enhances the way you prove the wrong view and right view among the people. In other words; how to collaborate and interact with other people while you aim to find common ground or possibility of reaching best solution. How to listen and respect the people's ideas and persuade them of the best idea without attacking the people's personality. I think it is very important to continue these kind of courses in order to solve the problems which inflicted Somalia for more than two decades.*

Abdi Gureie

*The lessons will impact on the way I work and remain memorable... I learnt a variety of skills for home and community. The objectives were met.*

Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (Gino)

*It provided the basic skills for facilitating dialogue. There were immediate practical benefits: my five year-old son now knows the difference between dialogue and debating. And the levels of listening: he said of someone, 'He's not listening empathetically'! There are two few women – in the Somali home the ladies are the pedestal.*

Abdinasir Ali Mohamed

*We benefited directly. It is not a coincidence that Galkayo was mentioned (that the Imam and the Pastor visited) – it is the only city that is divided. I was raised in that city and educated. One of my plans is to go to Galkayo and create dialogue between the two parties.*

Said Mohamed

*I learned... the concept of peace, and dialogue facilitation. The more I learn, the more I realise there is a need to learn.*

Abdulkadir Ruumi

*The course appealed to many inner beliefs. I left 23 years ago. I had led a sheltered cushy life. Then my world collapsed. I didn't want to know why. I never thought Somalis could be so vicious. I had stereotyping that eg wealthy people are different, or that the Southerners are different to the Northern people (because the North found peace and the South didn't). Lawrence and Phoebe asked us to look at our perceptions. I said that we (Northerners) are different from Southerners. Then someone said 'Did you go outside Mogadishu?' This helped me challenge my preconceptions. The course taught me listening skills. We need a manual, a Somali model of dialogue facilitation. This would open the way for so many networks.*

Muna Ismail

### **Speech on behalf of Nabad-Curiye:**

*The aim is to create grassroots trainers to start dialogue between people. The impact was immediate: before it ended we could see ideas coming up e.g. the idea of creating dialogue in Galkayo, dialogue in Mogadishu.*

*I am leaving tonight for Somalia to take up a post in the university. I postponed my departure because I thought that I should not leave without the necessary skills. A generation of young people have an unknown future. I want to pass on the message of peace to them.*

*I recommend that future courses should involve more from minority groups. We should stick together and cooperate. When people work together, mountains can be moved.* Abdinasir Ali

*The success of the first course in 2006 is this course. I am moved by the way the participants have thanked. It is easy to get the information, but much harder to put it into practice. You need to go and bring peace* Dr Yusuf Ali, President, Anglo-Somali Society

*You are not only peace creators, but peace makers and peace keepers. In 23 years here, I have never seen an event like this, with Somalis sitting quietly listening to each other. I have never seen Somalis of different tribes working together for something. We need to start in the diaspora. I am so happy today! I will spread the word, and you will be inspiring a lot of people.*

Prof Wasuge (prominent Somali TV presenter)

### **Film**

The Awards Ceremony was filmed and a short video built on the testimonies and an interview with Muna Ismail is being prepared.

### **Funding**

The programme was funded by a grant of £3000 from IofC, and by personal contributions from SIDD Trustees and Advisers and AfR members amounting to £1280.

### **Conclusion**

The course was effective, and much needed, participants came from different clans and regions. It was a capacity-building initiative for 21 individuals many of whom highlighted the fact that the course helped people listen to each other (see extracts of testimonial as attached). It is important that Nabad Curiye continues and be able to offer similar dialogue facilitation courses in the UK for the Somali community leaders and intellectuals. However further dialogue facilitation training courses need not only be in London but in other cities where there are sizeable settled Somali Community, e.g. Birmingham, Leicester, etc.

### **The future of Nabad Curiye work:**

- Follow-up series of 6 one day sessions including developing a comprehensive training manual that is relevant for the Somali communities, based on the training received
- continue initiatives in UK and Somalia
- hold dialogues facilitation not only in London but other cities (e.g. Birmingham and Northampton)



- Seek funding to further these initiatives, both in UK and in Somalia
- Develop Nabad Curiye networks both in UK and Somalia
- Hold refresher events for the participants (e.g. with lofC films)
- Use training resources written by the Imam and the Pastor on Dialogue Facilitation, 'No enemy to conquer' by Michael Henderson
- Develop training material relevant for Somali audiences in both Somali and English, based on training material available in Initiatives of Change, such as *Imam & Pastor* (with a Dialogue Facilitation manual), *An African Answer*, *Beyond Forgiving*, *For the Love of Tomorrow*
- Develop a concept for immediate application to Comic Relief

**Report – 'Peace Begins at Home' Somali Intergenerational Dialogue workshops, Islington – January 30, February 6 & 20, 2016**

**Background**

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, Somali Initiatives for Dialogue and Democracy, Initiatives of Change and Search for Common Ground collaborated in running a series of intergenerational dialogues for the Somali diaspora community in the Finsbury Park area, North Islington.

This programme of dialogues stemmed from consultations with the Somali community across the UK, that one of the biggest divides faced by the community is intergenerational, with 2nd generational Somalis in London more invested in their lives here, speaking English and facing the economic and social challenges familiar to many young people in Britain. Many older Somalis are less invested in British society, with lower levels of English and many still hoping to return home at some point in the future.

These challenges cause conflicting identities across the generations. There is a lack of understanding of the challenges faced by the other generation in daily life. Often these conflicts remain unaddressed in families, affecting both younger and older Somalis.

As a collaborative group, we saw that these challenges can be addressed in a safe and secure space of facilitated dialogue, giving opportunity for new ways of communicating, and focusing on building empathy and fresh understanding across the generations.

## **Purpose**

The dialogues aimed to bring together a cross-generational and cross-clan group in a series of facilitated dialogue workshops to

- increase understanding of the challenges faced by each generation
- build relationships across generations through dialogue
- share skills and tools for more effective communication around challenging issues
- inspire the community to tackle intergenerational conflict going forward

## **Planning and Development Phase**

It was natural to focus on the Somali community in Islington because Amina Khalid, the programme designer and facilitator, and Angarad Thain of St Ethelburga's both live in the area.

The outline for the dialogues included and the wider Somali community reflections on personal and community learnings and next steps

## **Community Engagement**

Raising awareness of the programme in the local community was done by convening a community Steering Group at Andover Community Centre in the heart of Finsbury Park. The group engaged community representatives and community leaders including the *Islington Somali Community*, *One True Voice* women's empowerment organisation and *Minority Matters*, educational empowerment charity for children and parents, and Cllr Asima Shaikh, Executive Member for Economic and Community Development for Islington Borough Council.

These meetings ensured community representatives and leaders were engaged with the programme from the outset, started the process of building trust and connection with the Somali community. The meetings led to a collaborative and iterative development process and changes to the programme design to fit the needs of the community, and enabled an effective recruitment and publicity process from within Somali community.

Steering Group meetings were held between the three dialogue days to incorporate community feedback on the outline of the dialogue days and to ensure a continuous reflective and learning process as the dialogues progressed.

Publicity was carried out by members of the Steering Group, flyers

were posted in the local Finsbury Park Mosque and extensive out-reach on foot around the Finsbury Park area was carried out by Amina Khalid.

A key part of all three dialogue days was sharing food together, and hot lunch was provided by a local Somali restaurant.

### **Delivery**

The two dialogue days and one follow-up day were held on three Saturdays at the Andover Community Centre, involving over 60 people across generations and clans from the Islington Somali community. A summary of the three days is below.

#### **Day 1: Saturday 30th January 2016**

- over 70 people
- included introductions from partner organisations and from Osman Jama Ali, former Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia
- hopes for the dialogues, and an icebreaker for all participants to reflect on where home is for them
- intergenerational case study from mother and daughter Lajeel and Idil Abdirahman reflecting on the challenges faced across generations
- younger and older generation groups identifying the key issues facing each generation
- sharing these with the community panel in the afternoon, made up of guest speakers including Cllr Watts, Leader of Islington Council, Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Opposition and MP for Islington North and Cllr Asima Shaikh

#### **Day 2: Saturday 6th February 2016**

- over 60 people
- included a recap on Day 1 and the key themes that had emerged in generational group discussions
- Input from Cllr Rakhia Ismail, Somali councillor for Islington Borough Council on the role of intergenerational communication in family life, and the role of the Somali community in contributing to public life
- conflict case study across generations and cultures shared by Howard Grace and Amina Khalid

- returning to group discussion on naming further key issues, and focusing on ideas for tackling these across generations (see Annex A)
- personal and group reflections on insights and learning taken from the two days

### **Follow-up day: Saturday 20th February 2016**

- 25 participants
- Group reflections on what has been learned and what changed since being involved in *Peace Begins at Home*
- Reflections on what it takes to listen well, and pairs practice of good and bad listening
- Reconnecting with key issues from Day 2 and next steps for action
- Roleplays of communication in family life
- Final evaluation and reflections

### **Next steps**

A further workshop in the same area is planned for the end of 2016.

### **Comments from participants**

*When we contribute to the family, we contribute to the community, and we can involve the policymakers. Workshops like this can be a platform where we can raise our concerns. What we learned here, we will take to our homes, to the community, the mosques and the churches. We have to begin where we can begin, talking to each other without judgement. It will have a positive impact on the wider community, and continuing sessions like this will have more impact on the community.*

Yusuf, Islington Somali Community (ISC)

*This is the start of the project. I am going to work with the families. Further training will be appreciated from our side.*

Asha Abdi, One True Voice

*In my family Peace Begins at Home created a platform where we can talk together. Before it was just short questions – “Hi how are you?” or “Have you done your homework?” and short answers. But now as parents we feel we and our children can talk together. Before when I was asked by the children, “Can we go out?” I used to say “Yes” or more often “No”! Now I reason with them and then we compromise a bit more – it’s a work in progress.*

Sadia, parent

*Over the last two weeks, she's been asking to talk together and she switches off the TV, and we talk together. And she gives more reasons for her answers. And I have been out more in the last couple of weeks.*

Sadia's son

Report by Angharad Thain

## Conclusion of mixed-generation discussion groups

Key issues	Next Steps/Solutions
<b>Parenting and Communication</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over-controlling:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i Adults were raised to obey orders and they need us to do the same</li> <li>ii They don't want us to question, but we need reasons</li> <li>iii Parents are over-concerned – they can assume the worst – they think we're susceptible to peer-pressure</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lack of a voice               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i Kids don't communicate</li> <li>ii Parents have more power, and don't take children seriously ('Good children have ears and no mouth')</li> <li>iii Learning through experience is important for finding your own way, good or bad</li> <li>iv Parents need to treat young people like adults</li> <li>v Teenagers think that friends are more important than family</li> <li>vi Parents should give children choice and explanation</li> <li>vii Parents need to be willing to learn about children's culture and day-to-day life</li> <li>viii Trust should be initiated and demonstrated by parents</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Technology               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i Parents think electronics are a waste of time – that it causes problems, that kids want to fit in.</li> <li>ii Parents need to understand the role it plays in their lives.</li> <li>iii Parents need time to spend with their families</li> <li>iv Parents don't communicate and have different values</li> <li>v Schools teach British values which leads to clashes with home values – kids spend more time in school than at home which gives it greater influence.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over-controlling               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Build more trust with each other as parents and children</li> <li>♦ Communicate more and find different ways of communication.</li> <li>♦ Parents should be open to new ideas/ways of thinking, less judgemental</li> <li>♦ More quality family time</li> <li>♦ More dialogue, less debate, open to changing your mind</li> <li>♦ Parents can be more strategic to not appear controlling.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lack of voice               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Parents shouldn't be too hard on children as they may feel like their freedom of speech is taken away from them</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Technology               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Certain age-groups should be given their own phones unless they are too young (eg 9 year olds)</li> <li>♦ They should spend a couple hours a week without electronics</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## Language

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Language (mother tongue) is important for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ understanding one's identity knowing your origin and history</li><li>◆ having a sense of belonging the sake of future generations</li></ul></li><li>◆ It is important to practice your language, even though your language may not be widely used for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ resolving conflict between parents and children</li><li>◆ integrating into our own community (though parents need to learn English as well)</li><li>◆ avoiding, confusion, disconnection, frustration, breakdown of communication</li></ul></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Family-based solutions</li><li>◆ Children equally responsible to take interest and learn it</li><li>◆ Parents speaking native language to children even if it is not widely spoken in society</li><li>◆ Policy-makers should encourage/arrange workshops to create intergenerational cohesion</li><li>◆ Policy-makers should make more resources available to facilitate learning of both native and adopted languages.</li><li>◆ Investing money in your people</li></ul> |
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## Culture/Religion

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Cultural clothes are important because they are a form of identity. Clothing is related to the culture, not the religion.</li><li>◆ Parents prefer to send their children to mixed schools rather than schools of their own culture.</li><li>◆ Religion is important because it is a way of life, and it teaches ethics and good manners.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Dialogue between parents and children</li><li>◆ Better communication</li><li>◆ Keep your own culture and be open-minded to others.</li><li>◆ We live in a multicultural society, so we have adapt and learn from each other.</li><li>◆ Parents should allow children to wear modern clothes, but they should be modest and dignified.</li><li>◆ Parents to help children to have good manners and teach them their religion, also to respect other people's faith.</li><li>◆ Mothers should allow their daughters to leave home and study outside London if they are old enough, as it is their life and they should ultimately choose their own destiny.</li></ul> |
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**Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party to the Somali Community at the Peace Begins at Home Intergenerational Dialogue Workshop in Islington, 30 January 2016**

*The contribution that Somalis have made is absolutely fantastic – the businesses you have opened, the community you have developed and the support you have given to young people... Even despite the huge problems of government spending-cuts and financial problems that have been passed on to our council, we have a duty – all of us – to build a strong, united community, here is Islington and everywhere else... The role of all of us is to support the diversity of communities, also to support communities organising together...*

*‘What I pick up from replies given today and many other comments made, are the problems about values. London is a wonderful city, no doubt about that. But it is also a tough place, particularly for young people. Particularly for young people from a community that has relatively recently established itself. To negotiate the very liberal, often very secular society with what is perhaps a stronger faith-based community at home. And, therefore, what was said about the attitudes of young people towards their elders and of the elders towards young people is a very important one.*

*‘It is a question of reaching out to the whole community. If we preach separation and if we preach unpleasantness to all – as some of our media do – then that plays out to something very, very bad. I am proud to represent a very diverse and very mixed area. That also means that all young people will need to have an equality of opportunity. If you are a Christian, Muslim or Jewish or Hindu youngster, you got to have the same chances in life.*

*‘Today’s meeting is an example of people coming together, confronting sometimes not easy issues, and leaving it together as a much stronger and a more respectful community. What I want to say is that there is some hope around.*

*‘When there was a horrible incident at the Mosque, before Christmas, when somebody tried to attack the mosque. Fortunately, the attack failed and everything was alright. We organised a vigil outside the mosque to show support. Very large number of people came, about a thousand people turned up. Very interestingly, three days later, we had the opening of the Jewish Hanukkah in Islington Green and many of the same people came there to say: “We are one community”. We might have different faiths, but we are of one community. That surely is a very strong message.*

*'We reach by talking to each other. We reach out through social media. We reach out through lots of other ways and one day our newspapers will understand that and stop printing hatred and start printing sympathy, understanding, and basic community solidarity.*

*Responding to a question on adult education, he said: 'Being bi-lingual is a very good thing. Children growing up bi-lingual, be it in Somali and English, or any other language and English is excellent because it helps them to understand other languages and helps their whole intellectual development.*

## **List of public figures who have been associated with SIDD:**

- Abdurahman Abdishakur, Minister of Planning
- Abdurahman Omer Osman (Yarisow), Minister of Information
- Abdulkadir Sheekhey Mohamed, Ambassador to United Arab Emirates
- Ali Khalif Galeyr, Prime Minister (2000-1)
- Ali-Nur Ali, parliamentarian
- Fauzia Yusuf Haji Aden, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Hassan Ali Khaire, Prime Minister (2016- )
- Hassan Mohamud (Geeseeye), peacemaker
- Hussein Saleh Musse, Deputy Prime Minister (2003-4)
- Guled Osman, presidential adviser
- Jibril Ibrahim Abdulle, Director of CRD, presidential candidate
- Khalid Maou Abdulkadir, parliamentarian
- Mohamed Adde Mukhtar, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour
- Mohamud Ahmed Nur (Tarzan), Mayor of Mogadishu
- Mohamud Mohamed Gure, parliamentarian
- Mohamed Mukhtar Ibrahim, Minister of Natural Resources
- Mohamed Sharif Mohamud, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Omar Salad Elmi, presidential candidate and peacemaker
- Osman Jama Ali, Deputy Prime Minister (2000-2003)
- Samiya Lerew, peacemaker and campaigner
- Sayid Ahmed Dahir, Ambassador to Uganda
- Zahra Hassan, presidential adviser