



HM Government Response

3 August 2017

HM Government Response to the Independent Commission for Aid Impact recommendations on: UK aid in a conflict-affected country: Reducing conflict and fragility in Somalia, June 2017

We welcome ICAI's review of the UK's work to reduce conflict and fragility in Somalia. The report provides a welcome and timely assessment as we reflect on the UK's priorities in Somalia following the successful London Somalia Conference in May this year.

We welcome ICAI's finding that our programmes are delivering important results, that we are learning from what we are doing, and that we are playing a leading role in building a more stable and prosperous Somalia.

Recommendation 1: Government departments delivering aid in Somalia should develop a more systematic and shared understanding of the drivers of conflict and fragility there, to help target aid programmes and ensure that they 'do no harm'.

Accept

The UK has a substantial body of analysis on the drivers of conflict in Somalia at our disposal, which we have gained through our programmes and implementing partners. We agree that we would benefit from drawing this wealth of analysis together into a more coherent and systematic analytical base to better inform a shared UK approach to addressing conflict and fragility in Somalia. We are taking the following steps towards this objective:

- We have commissioned the Somalia Stability Fund, to which the UK remains the largest donor, to undertake a macro-level analysis of conflict and conflict drivers in Somalia.
- We have begun work to refresh the UK's National Security Strategy for Somalia by the end of 2017, which will provide an opportunity to consolidate our analysis.
- We played an active role in the World Bank and UN-led Security and Justice Public Expenditure Review published this year. We will use the analysis from the review to inform our support for improving security and justice in Somalia.
- We will continue to use DFID Somalia's twice-yearly cross-office reviews of strategy and programme performance to enhance the links between lessons, evidence and academic research and UK aid programming and share the lessons across HMG.
- We will ensure that our DFID and CSSF teams continue to ensure that all projects actively consider conflict sensitivity during both the design and implementation phases. We will ensure that all CSSF Somalia project officers are able to demonstrate how their projects respect the principle of 'do no harm'.

Recommendation 2: More needs to be done to promote inclusion and human rights across the portfolio of UK aid to Somalia.

Accept

We agree inclusion is crucial to avoid deepening existing fault lines and provoking further conflict in Somalia. Through UK aid programmes we support a range of tailored initiatives that promote inclusion, particularly of women, and address human rights issues. All of our programmes are assessed for compliance with the UK international Development Gender Equality Act 2014 and undergo an annual review to ensure they 'do no harm' and, where possible, contribute to the promotion of inclusion and human rights. We complement this with active engagement in support of these issues with government and civil society counterparts through our diplomatic channels.

We recognise that we can do more. This is why we have recently commissioned the Stabilisation Unit to support us in developing a proactive approach to promoting human rights through DFID's security and justice programming. We will also use periodic reviews of DFID and CSSF activity in Somalia to identify where we may be able to do more to promote inclusion and the respect for human rights in Somalia.

We also recognise that we need the Government of Somalia and all donors to be doing more. This is why we successfully pushed for a commitment to more inclusive behaviour and improved respect for human rights in the New Partnership for Somalia (NPS) agreed between donors and Somalia at the London Somalia Conference in May 2017.

Recommendation 3: Where economic development and humanitarian programmes are also intended to contribute to peace- and stability-related outcomes, this should be specified as part of their objectives and built into their associated delivery plans and monitoring and reporting arrangements.

Partially Accept

Our economic development and humanitarian programmes are all making essential contributions to the UK's efforts to build a more peaceful and stable Somalia, alongside our direct support for security and justice-sector reform.

We accept that we can do more to articulate the overall connection between these programmes and our overriding objective to build a more stable, prosperous Somalia, and we will use the forthcoming refresh of the UK's National Security Strategy for Somalia to do so.

We will also use the annual reviews of our economic and humanitarian programmes to ensure that their individual contribution to broader UK peacebuilding and stability-related outcomes are more clearly articulated in all relevant programme documentation.

Recommendation 4: DFID and the CSSF should ensure that they provide sufficient oversight and political support to their private contractors, and agree with their counterpart government authorities memoranda of understanding to provide a clear framework of accountability.

Partially Accept

The New Partnership for Somalia commits the Somali Government and international donors to ensuring 'aid operations are designed and delivered in partnership with government institutions.' The UK is committed to honouring this principle.

We use a range of implementing partners to deliver UK aid programmes in Somalia, including multilateral agencies, private sector contractors, and NGOs.

In some cases formal memoranda of understanding between the UK and Somali authorities are helpful to clarify roles and responsibilities, particularly in programmes

that require close cooperation with, and support from, the Somali authorities. This is why we have established memoranda of understanding with government counterparts for our flagship economic development programmes in Somaliland. We are in the process of signing Project Implementation Agreements with the relevant Federal Member State authorities for the second phase of the UK's Public Resource Management (PREMIS) programme.

We will consider whether other DFID and CSSF initiatives could also benefit from such agreements and, where appropriate, put the necessary arrangements in place.

Recommendation 5: The CSSF should strengthen its operational management focus on monitoring, evaluation and learning, with realistic results frameworks which recognise indirect benefits such as diplomatic access and influence as well as more tangible programme outputs. It should be clearer whether projects are pilots or intended to deliver results at a significant scale.

Accept

We have begun a full refresh of the UK's National Security Strategy for Somalia, through which we will seek to demonstrate better, through improved coherence and clarity, how our portfolio of CSSF programmes supports the delivery of UK strategic objectives in Somalia.

We welcome ICAI's recognition that the CSSF in Somalia has built upon lessons from its predecessor, the Conflict Pool, and made improvements to monitoring and analysis. We have invested heavily in improving monitoring and evaluation across CSSF programming, including introducing results frameworks that enable us to better track progress and programme performance.

We recognise that we have more to do. We will identify and take steps by spring 2018 to improve further our monitoring, evaluation and lesson-learning capabilities for the CSSF in Somalia, drawing on experience from DFID as well as CSSF programmes in other fragile contexts.

Recommendation 6: All CSSF activities funded as ODA should have clear developmental objectives. Work on rule of law institutions should be well coordinated and aim at sustainability and national ownership.

Partially accept

We are working with our Somali counterparts to build a more stable and secure Somalia that is better able to provide security and justice for the Somali people. All CSSF activities that spend UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) money in Somalia are vigorously tested to ensure they fully meet the internationally agreed ODA rules, and we are reassured by the report that ICAI found no evidence to the contrary.

We recognise that in some instances we can articulate the primary purpose of our CSSF ODA-funded programmes in Somalia more clearly. We will use the forthcoming refresh of the UK National Security Strategy for Somalia, as well as the design phase and annual review of CSSF programmes, to identify where this may be necessary.

Recommendation 7: Departments operating in Somalia should adopt a more systematic approach to the collection and dissemination of learning on what works in addressing conflict and fragility, particularly for programmes that are intended to be experimental or adaptive in nature.

Accept

We agree that learning from our experience is crucial to our work in Somalia and is of real value to what we are doing in other fragile contexts. We are pleased ICAI has found

we have a good focus on learning in DFID programmes in Somalia, and that the CSSF has also made progress. We welcome the report's finding that our work in Somalia has helped to inform the UK's overall approach to using aid to address conflict and fragility.

We are taking steps towards a more systematic approach to learning. We have established real-time learning in one of our most innovative economic development programmes (facilitating access to cheaper, cleaner energy) to identify, share and use findings without having to wait for evaluations long after delivery. In the second phase of the Somalia Stability Fund, we are rolling out enhanced third-party monitoring, which will identify and feed back learning during the delivery phase to allow the programme to adapt quickly and to inform other initiatives in Somalia and elsewhere. We will ensure the real-time findings from this and other programmes are shared across all HMG departments operating in Somalia and more widely across HMG through the Stabilisation Unit and other relevant networks.

We recognise that we can do even more to systematise learning across the DFID and wider HMG network. We will continue to use the annual review process to ensure that lessons emerging from one programme in Somalia are being taken into account by others. We are also contributing to more systematic learning beyond Somalia: We are members of DFID's new Contact Group on Building Stability, which will inform the UK's approach to stabilisation work in many different fragile contexts based on real-life experience from the field. We have also been proactive in sharing DFID's experience of operating an enhanced approach to risk management with the CSSF Somalia team and across the DFID network, which is helping to improve approaches to risk management in other country contexts. And we have taken steps to collaborate more closely with the UK's East Africa Research Hub on topics of relevance to the UK's interests in Somalia and elsewhere, which are being used by both DFID and CSSF teams.

Recommendation 8: DFID and the FCO should explore opportunities for greater integration of working space, systems and processes to make 'One HMG' even more of a reality for UK aid in Somalia.

Accept

We have taken a number of steps in recent years to harmonise and consolidate the way our departmental teams operate. We share office space and accommodation in Mogadishu, Hargeisa and Nairobi. We readily use video conferencing and other technology to facilitate contact and collaboration across teams. We have put in place operational and strategically focused meetings attended by staff from all UK Government departments operating in Somalia to facilitate a joined-up UK approach.

We recognise we can do more to maximise our effectiveness. The ongoing, centrally managed One HMG initiative will bring welcome upgrades to our IT and communications systems within the next few years. This will make collaborating between teams even simpler, irrespective of their location, and ensure all our staff have access to the up-to-date systems they need to deliver high-quality UK aid programmes in Somalia.

On questions of policy and approach, we will continue to use the full range of departmental and national security structures to ensure full alignment of UK activity behind the UK's strategy for Somalia.