



Somalia

September 2023



Photo by: FAO

PBF Investments in



TOTAL APPROVED \$73.2 M

CURRENTLY ACTIVE: \$16.8 M

Focusing on

- National reconciliation
- Rule of law
- Democratic Governance
- Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

Partners



PEACEBUILDING CHALLENGES

Somalia has made important progress on peace- and statebuilding but faces persisting political, security and humanitarian challenges. Presidential elections in 2017 and 2022 were preceded by significant political tensions but ultimately led to a peaceful transfer of powers. Important reform processes have yielded results in improving public financial management and progressing on debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) since 2020. The normalisation of Somalia's relationship with the international financial institutions holds significant potential for a positive development trajectory. In addition to this, there has been discernible progress on the administration of the security sector, focusing on institutional capacity building reforms aimed at increasing civilian oversight, transparency and accountability in line with the National Security Architecture Agreement.

However, this positive trajectory remains fragile. The security situation has significantly deteriorated in 2023 as the Government continues its offense against Al-Shabaab while the African Union Transition Mission proceeds with its planned withdrawal. Humanitarian and climate-induced shocks occur recurrently, contributing to large-scale displacement. In recent years, further severe shocks have compounded the situation: the socio-economic impact of the desert locust invasion and of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the recurrent droughts and floods which increase food insecurity. Widespread unemployment disproportionately affects youth and women. While women's political participation has recorded recent improvements, more remains to be done to consolidate progress and promote Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE).

PEACEBUILDING FUND IN ACTION

Since 2009, the PBF has invested \$73 million through 37 projects. Somalia was first declared fully eligible for PBF funds in 2016. The Secretary-General granted another five years of eligibility in July 2020 upon request of the Federal Government of Somalia. Under this current eligibility, the PBF maintained its engagement with 7 new projects worth \$16 million, including new initiatives under the Fund's Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative.

Projects have focused on supporting inclusive reconciliation and conflict resolution efforts, supporting political transition and preparations for electoral security and dispute resolution. Women's participation in peacebuilding and political processes are mainstreamed across the PBF investment portfolio in Somalia and receives support through a flagship Women, Peace and

Protection programme. Moreover, the Fund has piloted new peacebuilding approaches focusing on the link between reconciliation and mental health and community-based mechanisms for reintegration of youth formerly associated with Al Shabaab. The Fund works through a wide range of UN agencies and civil society organisations, in close partnership with the UN's Special Political Mission in Somalia, UNSOM.

The PBF's support to Somalia is closely aligned with national priorities. In 2019, Somalia articulated its peacebuilding and sustainable development agenda in the Ninth National Development Plan (NDP-9), 2020-2024 and relevant policies, including the National Reconciliation Framework and the National Stabilisation Strategy. As in many countries, Somalia's path to peace and recovery is not a linear one. There can be setbacks, and programmatic approaches need to continuously adjust to political and security realities. The PBF continues to learn from lessons on how to best adapt its approaches.

■ PEACEBUILDING FUND IMPACT

In recent years, the PBF has been instrumental in promoting the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas with concrete results: A joint FAO-IOM project helped strengthen social cohesion in Buufow and Shalambod villages previously marred by clan conflict. Through a focus on youth and women's leadership, the project rebuilt trust between the communities, enabled shared access to public services (such as a maternal health facility and a market) and generated better livelihood opportunities which helped reduce conflict risk. An earlier project by the Life and Peace Institute enabled youth in Jowhar, Baidoa and Abudwak to work directly with government officials and clan leaders and helped them become constructively engaged in community service activities and dialogues on peace and security.

In 2021 and 2022, with the support of the Fund, UNDP and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia backed the participation of national stakeholders in National Consultative Councils to maintain dialogue amidst high levels of tensions ahead of Presidential elections. This fostered agreement between the Federal Government and federal member states, resulting in largely peaceful elections.

An independent portfolio evaluation of the PBF's support to Somalia 2016-2019 documented how the PBF has filled critical gaps in peacebuilding, unblocked political processes, promoted joint programming, and tried new approaches to protracted challenges, establishing proof of concept. For example, the Midnimo programme spearheaded an integrated approach to durable solutions for displaced and host communities, enabling over 800,000 people to access basic services while establishing mechanisms to empower their communities to plan for their own needs and address issues jointly. The project was instrumental in the creation of community networks that later continued to serve as platforms for facilitating other peacebuilding work, including addressing community grievances, promoting women's representation in local and national governance structures or such as soliciting and directing additional donor funding.

Overall, the Fund's investments were found to be strategically positioned along the humanitarian - development - peacebuilding nexus in Somalia and have contributed to the achievement of strategic outcomes described in the larger peacebuilding framework for Somalia, including on the extension of state authority and promotion of rule of law. The evaluation notably cited six major contributions of the collective PBF portfolio, focusing on **1) delivery of basic services; 2) improved social cohesion; 3) increased federal, state and district cohesion; 4) enhanced community and district mobilisation for development; 5) improved mechanisms for rule of law and settlement of grievances; and 6) improved economic opportunities.** Between 2017-2019, the PBF helped mobilize \$ 8.48 for every \$ 1 it approved in Somalia. This can be seen as a key marker of the Fund's impact and role in shifting resources and strategies from response to prevention.

■ PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION ENGAGEMENT WITH SOMALIA

At the request of the Federal Republic of Somalia, a high-level meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was convened in December 2020 on Somalia's peacebuilding priorities, including reconciliation, economic reconstruction and recovery, and gender equality, with the participation of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Women and Human Rights Development (MoWHRD) of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The meeting provided an opportunity to explore opportunities to support the National Reconciliation Framework (NRF) and the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in Somalia. The PBC remains dedicated to providing a platform for ensuring adequate and coherent support from the international community for the country's peacebuilding priorities.