



GLOBAL SOMALI DIASPORA

INTERNATIONAL ONLINE SUMMIT



PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT:
CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

NOVEMBER 28 - 29 2020
9:00-18:00 GMT, ONLINE

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INTERNATIONAL ONLINE SUMMIT, 2020

PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A SUMMARY REPORT OF OUR ANNUAL GLOBAL SUMMIT, A TWO-DAY EVENT THAT TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THE 28TH AND 29TH OF NOVEMBER 2020. AS A RESULT OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS, DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE SUMMIT WAS HELD VIRTUALLY.

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INTRODUCTION

The Global Somali Diaspora (GSD) is an international organisation that aims to mobilise and bring together the wider Somali diaspora, as well as those living in the homeland, for the purposes of enacting positive action. GSD promotes full integration into their host countries while also remaining connected to their cultural heritage of greater Somalia.

GSD encourages Somali diaspora to contribute to the reconciliation and rebuilding of Somalia. We have representatives around the world, including the US, Canada, Australia, Africa, Asia, and several European countries including UK, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, and Denmark. Since its inception in Istanbul in 2014, GSD has held three major conferences: 2015 in Kigali, 2016 in Mogadishu and 2019 in Istanbul again.



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, GSD's annual conference in 2020 was held virtually on 28th - 29th of November.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM ISTANBUL 2019

The previous year's conference brought together over 150 distinguished Somali delegates, from all areas of public life, including high-ranking politicians, diplomats, renowned academics, Islamic scholars, civil society leaders and established professionals from the private and public sectors. Themes addressed in the conference derived from some of the most pertinent and pressing issues facing the global Somali population, from business and entrepreneurship to youth and social responsibility. Keynote speakers and panellists engaged in widespread knowledge exchange with the audiences and shared their expertise, while also providing ways in which certain issues are to be tackled. There were also workshops and other collaborative events that maximised engagement among the audience, participants, and delegates. Entertainment was provided by famed Somali poets and musicians, while exhibitions to showcase the diverse creativity of the Somali culture and tradition were also central to the event.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 2019 CONFERENCE

- Brought together over 150 key diaspora stakeholders, policy makers, civil society organisations, international and government institutions, and Somali members of business and private sectors from across the world
- Facilitated panel discussions, keynotes, and practical workshops to network, learn, collaborate, and tackle some of the biggest issues facing Somalia and Somalis worldwide
- Enabled platforms for collective action and consolidated efforts and opportunities for Somalis to unify on key issues

INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL
**SOMALI DIASPORA
CONFERENCE**

**Youth, Reconciliation, Business & Environment:
Challenges & Opportunities**

14-17 June 2019, Istanbul

GSD GLOBAL SOMALI DIASPORA YUNUS EMRE ENSTİTÜSÜ

H East Africa Association Somali Bank TURKISH AIRLINES MAP Afrika Vakfı ICYF KIMS Microfinance

OBJECTIVES FOR 2020

The overall aim of our conference is to create a platform that allows the discussion of the most current issues concerning the Somali people, both in Somalia and in the diaspora.

For the 2020 annual summit, the focus was on two themes:

- The environment: how to protect and better manage the natural resources, so that we may become resilient against disasters
- The 'Somali people:' how to enable and enrich the dialogue between locally based Somalis and those in the diaspora, ensuring synergy and finding ways of working together

The conference sought to take a solution-oriented approach, as it ran morning and afternoon workshops that addressed practical issues, such as equality and diversity within Somalia's labour force, managing expectations and misunderstandings amongst youth and employers, economic opportunities that bring together investors, as well as creating spaces to network and exchange knowledge.

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 PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES
 NOVEMBER 28 - 29 2020 | 9:00-18:00 GMT, ONLINE
 4:00-13:00 EST AND 12:00-21:00 EAT

H.E. AMBASSADOR JAMA MOHAMED AIDID Ambassador for the Federal Republic of Somalia to the Republic of Turkey
DR MEHMET YILMAZ Turkish Ambassador to Somalia
H.E. BEN FENDER OBE British Ambassador to Somalia
MINISTER HAMZA SAID HAMZA Somal Minister of Youth and Sport
AMASSADOR ALI SAID FAQI Speaker of South West State Parliament
MOHAMMED ABDIKER Regional Director of East & Horn of Africa, IOM
MARIAM YASSIN HAGI YUSSUF The Special Envoy on Children's & Migrants Rights, the Federal Court of Somalia
PROFESSOR ŞEREF ATEŞ President Yunus Emre Institute
DR. RIA AERTS Founding Partner, Migrant Women in Business

DR BADAL HASSAN Researcher, University of Helsinki
ENG. DR ABDULLAHI ALI Assistant Professor, University of Nottingham
DR SHAHID YAMIN Chairman and Co-founder Global Opportunities Commercialisation Pty Ltd
KASSIM GABOW DUALE NIS Founder
ENG. ABDULLAHI ADEN Somal Cultural Association
DR HAMDHA HASSAN WARSAME Associate Professor, faculty of medicine and health science East Africa University Bossaso
BURHAN ISMAIL Motivational speaker
MOWLID BASHIR Chairman of Refugee Integration and Human rights

ENTERTAINMENT BY....
IFRAH MANSOUR
ABDI BADIL
BASHIR ALI HUSSEIN
AARMAANTA

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EVENT DATA

The event received over 34,000 views across our multiple streaming platforms (Facebook live, Instagram live and YouTube streaming), reaching many countries around world. Delegates were able to ask their questions live and interact with one another.

STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVE

The conference was divided into two days. It began with an **opening ceremony on day 1**, which began with an obligatory recitation of the Quran, followed by a series of keynote speeches, panels and highlights of individual Somali-diaspora trailblazers and performances by talented artists.

Day 2 followed in similar fashion. The following report will provide the highlights of the keynote speeches and panels. Following this, a targeted action plan will be provided.

OPENING CEREMONY

Following a brief remark by **Jawaahir Daahir, MBE**, the audience heard from **H.E. Somali Prime Minister, Mohamed Hussein Roble**. A member of the Somali diaspora himself, he later left Sweden in 2000 to return to Somalia. From 2000 to 2007, he was part of the construction team that worked on building the University of Mogadishu, the Coca-Cola factory, and many other institutions, including schools and mosques and vital infrastructure, such as river dams and roads in Mogadishu.

The Prime Minister spoke about the significant contributions made by the Somali diaspora in the continual development of the country, while urging the diaspora, especially the youth, to become more actively involved in Somalia's progress.



Image 1: H.E. Somali Prime Minister, Mohamed Hussein Roble

PANELLISTS

Somali Minister of Youth and Sports, H.E. Hamza Said Hamza, provided a lens into the varied environmental challenges facing Somalia and how they intersect with youth and future generations. The minister discussed how climate change, forestation, pollution, polluted water, and other misuse of natural resources are part of the many environmental changes that directly affect Somalia and Somalis worldwide, and how Somali youth may play a role in rebuilding the state. Minister Hamza has also advised that the global Somali diaspora should support and sensitise young people in participating in the development and implementation of sustainable solutions.

Director General for Overseas Promotion and Cultural Affairs, H.E Ambassador Deniz Çakar, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said she was pleased that GSD was working hard to achieve its objectives by bringing the Somali diaspora together, while strengthening close ties and cooperation among the diaspora and those in the homeland. She talked about the mutual relationship between Somalia and Turkey which has grown since 1992.

She highlighted the fact that Turkey has provided enormous scholarships to Somali students, and that a Turkish Cultural Centre has opened its doors in Mogadishu. She appreciated the efforts of both the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States, who worked to develop a roadmap for national elections. She stressed that this election process should be led “by the Somalis for the Somalis.”

She concluded that Turkey would continue its ongoing support to the Somali government, aimed at advancing security, public health, education, and institutional capacity. This is to enable stability in the country, and throughout the region.

Somali Ambassador to Turkey, H.E. Jama Abdullahi Mohamed, provided an in-depth look into Somalia’s economic growth, indicating seven points:

1. 2.9% growth in 2019 due to the recovery of agriculture and domestic consumer demand
2. Inflation decreased to 4.4%, meaning that food prices would decrease
3. 37% of Somali population are under the age of 30
4. GDP is forecasted to grow at 3.2% in 2020 and 3.25% in 2021
5. Somalia is normalising relations with international financial institutions and together with the development partners
6. Somali diaspora needs to invest in Somalia, so that their investment projects will create jobs and opportunities for the young people in the country
7. Foreign direct investment has increased steadily as result of the diaspora’s remittances and foreign investment in the country

He also said that his government is planning to open a Somali school in Turkey, which will be under the supervision of the Minister of Education, as many families have relocated from Somalia to Turkey.

British Ambassador to Somalia, H.E. Ben Fender OBE, highlighted the contribution of the UK-based Somali diaspora to both Somalia and the UK.

He said of British-Somalis: *“you are today our MPs, medics and master musicians.”*

He applauded the efforts of the Somali Diaspora in the reconstruction and development of Somalia. He cited examples, which include Somali-British nurses who took unpaid leave to help in Somalia’s COVID-19 crisis, and the entrepreneurs returning to create employment opportunities and revitalise the economy.

Speaker of Southwest State Parliament, H.E. Ambassador Ali Said Faqi, spoke passionately to the young people in Somalia, and those in the diaspora. He met many young migrants who were struggling in European countries. He believes that those who are failing, are doing so as a result of their environment and they have picked up ‘bad habits.’ He concluded with a call to empower the young, and to facilitate opportunities for them to actively become involved in spaces of decision-making, especially in politics.

President of Yunus Emre Institute, Professor Şeref Ateş, spoke about how his institute has supported major projects in the past, including those by the Global Somali Diaspora. He has a passion to continue this strong relationship with the Somali community and hopes to work on further initiatives.

Mohammed Abdiker, IOM's Regional Director for East and Horn of Africa, spoke about Somali youth migration. He said:

"Somali migrants are usually irregular, with the youth and the internally displaced people having been particularly vulnerable to this. In this regard, high levels of youth unemployment, lack of good public service delivery and social inequality, are all drivers of irregular migration."

He pointed to the strong working relationship between the IOM and the Federal Government of Somalia, regional authorities, international agencies, experts, and civil society. These groups should work together to implement programs through three pillars:

1. Ethos of preparedness and humanitarian response
2. Focus on long-term recovery and durable solutions
3. Efforts related to migration governance and development should be through diaspora engagement

He concluded that Somalia is recovering and has a bright future. IOM looks forward to continuing to explore cooperation and collaboration with the Federal Government of Somalia and its people, including the global diaspora.

DIASPORA YOUTH AND VIOLENCE

KEYNOTE

Dr Shahid Yamin, Executive Chairman and Co-Founder of Global Opportunities and Commercialisation Pty Ltd ('GOC').

According to Dr Shahid, Somalia is a resilient country because of the historical circumstances that it has experienced. He said that Somalia has under-utilised its human potential, as 70% of its population are young. Yet there is also widespread terrorism and a cultural fear that comes along with it, not to mention the lack of overall development in the country.

Mass unemployment and hopelessness has disenfranchised the youth in Somalia, while those in the diaspora are dealing with challenges pertaining to their identity and cultural heritage. Nevertheless, the wider Somali diaspora has maintained its identity and connection with the homeland. Dr Shahid classified Somali diaspora into two groups:



Image 2: Dr. Shahid Yamin

Dr Shahid urged that the Somali youth and children receive support from the Somali community and provide training opportunities, counselling, and guidance. He has also suggested that the family and community should cooperate to provide skill-building and job creation opportunities for the youth. He suggests that the Somali diaspora should contribute, by way of donations, to youth-based capacity-building programs so that more businesses and jobs are created.

PANELLISTS

Abdibasid Ali Mohamed, Behaviour Analyst, Psychotherapist (CBT), Master NLP Coach, provided a unique glimpse into the experiences of Somali diaspora youth in Norway and Denmark, noting similarities in other parts of the Western world.

Abdibasid shared his perspective and experiences on the widespread violence in Somali communities in Denmark and Norway. He noted that there is cross-border migration of Somali youth, particularly those migrating from the UK to Norway. Diaspora youth have multiple challenges, including, but not limited to, gang violence and housing problems. There are many contributing factors. He argues that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

plays a significant role in many of the problems facing Somali people. A parent's traumatic experience will often affect the ways in which they raise their children. As a result, negative impacts of the trauma may create a cultural imbalance and conflict between the parents and children. This disconnection between parent and child may open the door for the child to be influenced elsewhere, meaning that there is space for the young person to become engaged in violent acts.

He spoke about the "good girl syndrome", which means that girls cope differently under these conditions, and that it is often boys that are most affected. He said that provisions should be made to address socio-economic challenges, and that mentorship is vital to the progress of young people. He suggests that easing pressure on the child will create a healthy relationship between parents and children, and that mental health support should be provided.

Ahmed Yare, Coach, Youth Activist and Motivation Speaker, shared his insight and experiences on the varied factors that contribute to young people becoming involved in gang-related violence. In speaking about his own personal experience as a former gang member, he said, "everything starts at home." He also addressed how the lack of connection between parents and children, could lead the child to fall into the hands of violent crime. Somali parents are often unaware of what their children are doing, and the lack of attention devoted to the children leads to low self-confidence. If a child doesn't feel empowered with confidence, they can turn to the wrong path. He urged parents to not give up on their children, and that change is certainly possible if the opportunity presents itself.

Naciimo Hared, Chair of Mother and Child Welfare Organisation, brought with her the perspective of a parent of diaspora youth. Her 10-year experience working in the prison systems meant that she's interacted with many incarcerated Somali youth. She's been mostly involved in the rehabilitation process of Somali youth in prison, and their integration back into society. She notes that there is a general lack of emotional support, as well as government intervention, when it comes to the deportation of diaspora youth to Somalia, once they have been to prison. There is also a social stigma attached to being a diaspora youth in the homeland, considering the western cultural tropes associated with diaspora. She says that prison conditions in Somalia need to be improved, that the Somali government should engage in social issues affecting the diaspora. She also urged panellists and community workers to visit prisons and engage with Somali youth.

Abdi Hussein, CEO of Hidaayah House, shared possible opportunities to help the youth through community mobilisation efforts. He suggested that the Somali community needs to consider young people as partners, and a part of the community, including them in meaningful discussions. This will bridge the information gap between parents, elders, and the youth. He also suggested community intervention in the first instances or signs of violence and violent crime among the youth.

DIASPORA YOUTH: LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND SENSE OF BELONGING

KEYNOTE



Prof. Ali Jimale, Chair and Professor of Comparative Literature, Queens College, and the CUNY Graduate Centre, was the keynote on this deeply complex subject. Prof. Ali shared his deep research into the topic, and more specifically on issues related to sense of home and belonging. He said that when people leave their country and come to other places, there is a sense of longing and always thinking about the country they left. Various frictions can emerge, from isolation to uprooting, which can cause further friction at the community and intergenerational levels.

PANELLISTS

Yasin Abdullaahi, Somali-Swedish Politician, Language Teacher, provided practical advice to parents and young people in learning and retaining the Somali language while abroad. Yasin pointed to a phenomenon that exists in the diaspora community, where children only speak non-Somali languages, whether outside or inside the home. It is key that parents speak Somali at home, so that the children will mimic them. He also called for parents to embed dialectical engagement in the day-to-day experiences of the home.

Iman Togane, Author, specializes in dual languages for children. She spoke about the origins of her book. She talked about the challenges facing diaspora youth, particularly those keen to teach their own children Somali. She touched on how the confidence to speak Somali among youth is low, due to the fear of being mocked or ridiculed for their accents. She encourages all diaspora youth to persevere.

Burhan Ismail, Motivational Speaker, says that he notices that whenever the youth want to speak Somali, they have to add foreign languages into the mix. This is due to the community in which they live, and the schooling being offered in a language that is not

Somali. His call was for young people to try to speak Somali whenever they come together.

Eng. Abdullahi Aden, Founder of Somalia Culture Victoria, Australia, says that young people in the diaspora face a lot of conflicting experiences, and this translates into difficulties for some to speak, or proactively learn Somali. He says that one's nationality and humanity are reflected in one's language. For him, the collective Somali diaspora should be encouraged to speak Somali and made aware of their identity.

Hussein Abdulle (Wadad), Teacher and Author, says that the language and culture of the country is pervasive, and so diaspora members must be creative in developing and fortifying opportunities and spaces where children and youth can come together and learn the Somali language.

Mohamed Diini, Islamic Scholar, Founder and Executive Director of Mogadishu Book Fair, spoke about founding the Mogadishu Book Fair in 2015:

"It started with the efforts of the youth which made the program a success. The importance of opening Mogadishu Book Fair was that the author, the reader, the library, and the community came together. They have come together to read, as well as share knowledge and wisdom."

YOUTH AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

KEYNOTE

Dr Idil Abdi Osman, Lecturer, Media and Communication, University of Leicester, spoke about the differences and similarities between the youth in the diaspora and those in the homeland. She described the Somali youth in the following ways:

- Somali youth are very energetic and very decisive
- They would like to make a difference to society, and to Somalia
- They are frustrated by the political, social, economic, and cultural structure and conflict-related barriers that stand in their way
- They feel under-appreciated by the wider Somali society
- They have a clear understanding of the common issues that concern them, especially in areas of education, job opportunities, economic barriers, and public health

For those in the diaspora, she noted:

- They avoid the elders' interests, if it conflicts with their own, and often find their own ways to participate in the development of their home country
- They follow alternative ways to intervene using new media and online platforms
- Digital technology allows us to see the full potential of young people



Image 3: Dr Idil Abdi Osman

Dr Osman further noted that the youth needed practical support, from the wider community, which would help them solve their problems. She also argues that more recognition should be given to the regenerative power of media and digital platforms:

"We need to underscore the opportunities digital media has given us, especially now in the lights of COVID-19. Our conference right now is testimony to that."

She concluded that people should be encouraged to create networks and platforms to raise awareness and usher in further developments for Somalia.

PANELLISTS

Hassan Buraale, Head of German Somali Community, spoke about his engagement in the community on the issues related to youth and civic engagement, as well as job creation opportunities. He advocates for skills-based initiatives for the youth which would

make them more self-sufficient and allow them to contribute to their communities in a positive way.

Mowlid Abdi Hussein, Youth Activist, Former Vice President of Somalia's Student Society, remarked on his focus on building learning initiatives and skill-building programs for the youth. He considered the potential of the Somali youth and how the Somali community should take advantage of their potential. He said it was the right time for the Somali community to start engaging with the youth.

Khadija Mohamed, Lawyer, Co-Founder of Northern Advocacy Organization, spoke about the ways in which their organisation's progress to solve community problems has been hindered by the community, particularly in the areas of gender and sexual violence. This was more prevalent among the elders in the Somali community, who didn't trust the youth to solve these problems. She said that society does not consider youth as partners, but as beneficiaries, meaning that they are often left out of the decision-making process. As a result of this, she believes that the youth lack the skills to engage in civic leadership and that more training should be provided.

Aragstan Ismail, Civic Activist, Saudi Arabia, spoke about her work in creating opportunities for young people in civic leadership. She discussed the unique challenges faced by Somali youth in the Arab world, including language barriers and concerns related to identity. She calls for the Somali government and Somali leaders to give much attention to the Somali Youth in the Arab world.

Abdiwahab Aden, Garas Aid, shared his experiences of Somali youth in Germany. He said that giving youth a platform to demonstrate their contribution would bring about further developments for the wider Somali community. He concluded that the Somali community ought to be empowering their young with education, so that it will later benefit Somalia and boost its economy.

Marian Abdi Hussein, Chair of The Inclusion Committee in The Socialist Left Party of Norway, said that the youth need the right tools to bring new ideas to society. She mentioned that the young generation should also take the initiative to organise themselves and find ways in which they may be able to bring new ideas that help their communities.

HOMELAND YOUTH, TAHREEB, IMMIGRATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

KEYNOTE

H.E. Ambassador Dr Ali Said Faqi, Speaker of Southwest State Parliament, Former Somali Ambassador to EU, spoke about the migration of youth throughout the Somali territories and into Libya, and how they are unfairly treated by Libyan authorities. Although COVID-19 has added additional challenges, including their delayed safe return to Somalia, efforts are being carried out by the government to ensure their safety and wellbeing.



Image 4: H.E. Ambassador Dr Ali Said Faqi

PANELLISTS

Bonnie Evans-Hills, Coordinator, UN Office for Genocide Prevention and Global Plan of Action for Religious Leaders & Activists. Bonnie provided an overview of the migrant situation, European Union law, as well as the Dublin Agreement, and how there is an overall lack of humanitarian response to those seeking asylum in Europe.

Aar Maanta, Somali Artist, and former UNICEF Ambassador shared his insights on advocacy as an artist. The migrant situation had impacted him personally as a member of

his family ended up in Libya, saying that social media plays a significant role in influencing young migrants. He also urged those in the diaspora to visit the refugee camps and do their best to help these young people.

Zak Salad, British Somali Filmmaker, spoke about producing a documentary about the youth migration situation affecting Somalis. He mentioned the varying experiences of those embracing the long arduous journeys. He agrees that social media is a major influence on the youth, and that Somalis can use social media as a tool to engage with at-risk youth.

Mariam Yassin Hagi Yussuf, Special Envoy on Children's Migrants Rights, Federal Government of Somalia, said that what is driving Somali youth to take these dangerous journeys away from their homes is insecurity and a lack of opportunity. These youth are convinced that life is better abroad. It is critical that Somalis provide safe alternatives for these young people. This may be implanted through diplomacy; social work; familial networks; the global Somali diaspora; civil society and government action. We need to work collaboratively to ensure no further lives are lost.

YOUTH EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The conversation started with inspiring words from **Omar Mohammed (Umar-Faruq)**, one of the Founders of Xidig Youth Organisation in the Netherlands, who said: *“young people are said to be the most important and fundamental unit of any society... They build the future because they are the future.”*

KEYNOTE



Dr. Ria Aerts, opened the session and highlighted the relationship between education and employment, as well as the importance of having both. She also said that there are young people with talent, knowledge and skills who feel they aren't 'good enough.' The community needs to nurture their talents and gear them towards success.

PANELLISTS

Shoki Hayir, Teacher of Political Science at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Maastricht University, the Netherlands, says that he believes the Somali youth are wonderful and energetic, though there are still economic and political challenges facing their progress.

Muna Abdullah Hagar, SEF (Somali Expat forum), Qatar, said that most young people finish their education without having the proper skills to succeed, which has made it difficult for them to find work. The community ought to encourage job training programmes, and volunteering, so that they are better equipped to face the real world.

Fouzia Warsame, the Deputy Chief of Party – Policy, Curriculum and Government Liaison for the “Bar Ama Baro” Program at Creative Associates International, said that making employment opportunities for the youth is important, as it would mean better economic development for the country. She emphasised that education should always be prioritised:

“Improving the educational system is critical for young people and their development.”

Yusuf Noor, Consultant, said that young people often do not learn the necessary skills to engage in contemporary systems. Their education is too general, and they don't have skills required in the markets, which often leads to mass unemployment. However, if there is a robust focus on personal development of the individual, their leadership endurance, emotional intelligence and other soft skills, opportunities for young people would grow.

Abdurahman Nour Yusuf, Head of MAANDHIS, in Somalia, said it was critical that efforts were made to increase the quality and access to higher education for Somali youth.

Mohamed Bashir Osman (Midnimo), Young Somali Entrepreneurs and the Founder of Da'uus Advertising Agency, is an example of youth success in Somalia. Mohamed returned to the country in 2012 and seized on the opportunities that were available in the country. In 2015, he created several businesses throughout the country, while also training and employing many young people.

ENVIRONMENT: CIVIL CONFLICT AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

KEYNOTE



Dr. Abdullahi Ali, University Lecturer in Transportation & Environmental Impact and Sustainability, spoke about transportation and the effects of air pollution in Somalia. Transportation is the backbone of any country's economy and it improves the quality of life of the community. Countries with better transportation networks and services are leaders in industry and commerce. Though transportation improves the quality of services, it should also be safe and environmentally friendly. He also pointed out that Somalia's urban population will increase rapidly in the coming years.

PANELLISTS

Mohamed Abdirahman Abdi, Somali Youth Volunteers for Development Association (SOYVDA), said that despite Somalia's challenges due to the prolonged conflict and lack of a peaceful environment, it is getting back to recovery. He said that civil conflict impacts development. As a result of this, many people have migrated, and the infrastructure has collapsed. Despite all these challenges and odds, the Somali youth, who are 70% of the population, have been contributing to building the many different sectors and programs that address social conflict.

Volunteerism and community engagement on the awareness of a clean environment will help to reduce pollution. He said that to solve these environmental challenges it would require collective action, involving all stakeholders. There is no budget allocated to addressing environmental challenges in Somalia. However, he noted that the community relies on themselves and often take the initiatives to improve their own environments, like beach cleaning activities on Fridays in the city.

Yanina Dehaerne, a Young Environmental Activist from Australia, said that there are many ways young people can help the environment; raising money to save endangered animals, educating people on recycling techniques, and reducing emissions from the atmosphere, to name a few. Hazardous chemicals dilute the soil and water, and the food we eat, she said, while telling the audience about how she got into the environmental activist work:

"I started to compost when I was 14 with two of my friends and we took the food waste from our classroom and turned it into the fertile soil that we used in our gardens, which helped to reduce emissions in the atmosphere"

Chemicals kill organisms in the soil. She recommends the youth to organise events on global warming and promote beneficial insects for pollination. These efforts, she says, will

reduce waste and energy pollution, concluding that creativity and freedom to take action will mobilise the youth.

Mohamed Okash, Head of Innovations at the Institute of Innovations, Entrepreneurship and Technology, Somalia, said that, as a nation, Somalia is one of the poorest and less developed countries in Africa and the world, and that it is experiencing developmental challenges, that include the lack of natural resource management.

Okash stated that weak governance has had a huge impact on environmental and land degradation. These challenges have contributed to food insecurity, waste, and poor resource management. It has resulted in omissions that affect the business progress in Somalia. He also mentioned the impact of environmental challenges on rural and urban areas. However, there are positive attempts to solve these challenges, such as the passing of the 'National Environmental and Management Act.' Few programs intervene in environmental issues and it is largely neglected in Somalia.

Ikraam Abdiaziz Jama holds a bachelor's degree in Humanities and Arts with Focus on Nutrition and Food Science and resides in Somalia.

Ikram noted that the environment is around us all and should be a cause of concern to everyone. We must work together to rebuild and care for our environment. She made a plea to the audience to become change-makers on environmental issues.

Environmental issues can bring many changes to displaced people, and when they arrive at their new environment, they need shelter, water, and food to sustain their lives. Somalia has a large hector of food security and we always witness the export of food from outside.

One of the solutions, she says, could be to carry out studies into environmental causes in Somalia. We would need to have practitioners with background knowledge of environmental sciences.

FLOODING AND DESERTIFICATION: CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS

KEYNOTE

Dr Badal Hassan, University of Helsinki, Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, spoke



about the challenges facing the environment in Somalia, including drought, floods, and environmental degradation. He also addressed how uncertainty over land ownership and management has created a conflict between aspiring farmers, pastoralists, and the local community. For him, it is important to find a new way to manage these problems in Somalia.

PANELLISTS

Shamso Araweelo Sheegow, an Environmental Activist, Denmark, detailed her early experience in environmental activism, and the co-founding of BadBaado Degaan, a youth organization that has planted trees across Somalia. Her efforts highlight the importance of direct action of community and young people to create change and address environmental risks faced by vulnerable communities.

Dr Hamda Hassan Warsame, Associate Professor Faculty of Medicine and Health Science East Africa University Bosaso, said that heavy rains result in flash floods that damage crops, livestock, and the environment. Local and federal governments should play a responsible role in educating people about the rules and regulations of plant care and its importance.

Mohamed Farah, Co-Founder of Amin Ambulance, UNOCHA Somalia (MoJC), highlights the many ways to prevent recurring problems and develop these areas. He said that it is important to create environmental agencies that are responsive to flooding and river problems. They should work to solve these problems and develop laws to implement solutions. Somali people should be more knowledgeable about these recruitment activities and encourage young people to learn about the environment. Local and federal governments and GSD should support these kinds of organisations.

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

KEYNOTE

Saynab Mohamed Hassan, Founder of Somali Gender Movement, worked as a consultant for the Somali President on issues relating to education, gender and peace and reconciliation. She discussed education, the economic involvement of women and their right to participate in Somali politics and leadership. She noted in the diaspora Somali women have achieved a lot in education, going so far as to earn PhDs. However, the same does not apply to the women in Somalia.

In Somalia, girls drop out of school at higher levels, in comparison to boys. Multiple factors contribute to this, such as early marriage and family financial instability. There are very few Somali women involved in the business sector.

Women are finding more representation in Somali politics, especially in the upcoming elections. She also noted that women make up 24% of the Somali upper house. She calls for all the stakeholders, civil society, and Somali leaders to take the responsibility to make sure women have a secured share of representation in coming elections. She says that at least one-third of each clan representative seats of the parliament should be held by women.

PANELLISTS

Fatuma Musa Afrah, Award-Winning Activist, Freelancing Keynote Speaker, Consultant and Founder of United Action e.V., noted the current challenges that Somali women face in Germany. Somali culture has positive practices when it comes to women, however, some gaps need to be addressed collectively. Her idea is that both women and men should work together. She hopes to hold a Somali women's conference in Germany. She also recognizes that Somali women have made progressive changes in the past, saying they should become the change they want to see, without waiting for anyone to do it for them.

Mohamed Mohamud, Author of 'Somali Sideways: Photobook In changing Perceptions of the Somalis and 'Somali sideways: Araweelo Edition.' He mentioned that he wrote this book to change the way people view Somali women. He was compelled to do so because the general view of women is that they are 'the backbone of society.' He believes that Somali women do not receive the recognition they deserve. He was inspired by personal stories of Somali women and wanted to create a platform that can showcase the success stories of Somali women to the rest of the world. He suggests that women should be given the chance to represent themselves, so that they may address the challenges that are unique to them, including gender and sexual violence. Somalis should change the old narratives and stereotypes about Somali women.

Dr Caisha A. Arai, Advocate for Women's Rights. Having lived in Sweden, Dr Arai returned to Somalia and worked with different institutions in the health sector. Somali mothers experienced many health challenges. She believes that Somali society is a male dominated. She recognizes the contribution of women who continually work hard. She said that, even though women are educated, they don't have the platform to present their ideas. This is partly to do with the upbringing of Somali girls, who are not trained to take leadership roles in society. She suggested that society should uplift women and Somali women should work collaboratively together.

SOMALI-TURKISH RELATIONS

KEYNOTE

Turkish Ambassador to Somalia, H.E. Dr Mehmet Yilmaz, reflected on the historic relationship between Turkey and Somalia. He mentioned how the Ottomans helped Somalia in the fight against the colonialists, and how Turkey opened its embassy in Mogadishu in 1981.

Turkey has commenced a programme of humanitarian assistance to Somalia and has become the leading donor of humanitarian assistance in Somalia, bringing vast changes to the country.

He said: “our relationship with Somalia focuses on capacity-building initiatives, especially for institutions. In this aspect, the main thing of our cooperation with Somalia is its economy, education and security.”

He mentioned the number of scholarship opportunities given to Somali students. Thousands of Somali students are choosing Turkish universities each year. He also said that graduates have contributed back to Somali society. According to Dr Yilmaz, many



graduates hold significant positions in Somalia's government and state institutions. Turkey has also contributed to building schools for thousands of students, who graduate each year and pass the same rotation for scholarships.

Turkey has trained many security personnel and police forces, including the Somali National Army. This progress enhances the stability of the economy and enables market interaction.

He said that Somalia has been taking steps towards improving its economy and its access to international financial institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank. Bilateral trade between the two countries has increased. He encourages the Somali diaspora to invest in Turkey, which has become an attractive destination for many Somalis. Despite Somalia facing many challenges on the ground, he recognizes the tremendous progress that has been made in the last few years, in terms of security, politics, and the economy.

PANELLISTS

Somali Ambassador to Turkey, H.E. Jama Mohamed touched on the historic visit of President Erdogan in 2011. He noted that Turkey has contributed to the development of security, economy, health, and education. Turkey has built infrastructure, such as roads and hospitals that have helped the Somali people. He reflected on how the Turkish people

were hospitable when many Somali patients were taken to hospitals in Turkey. He mentioned the humanitarian intervention of the brotherly nation of Turkey.



Image 5: H.E. Jama Mohamed

He said: *“Turkey's humanitarian intervention in Somalia is unique in all aspects when it comes to the effectiveness of its implementation...I think the secret of Turkey's humanitarian intervention to Somalia is driven by the modern imperative to assisting brotherly nations, and it's this principle that is enshrined in the embassy.”*

He also noted how Turkey's government was proactive during the COVID-19 pandemic. Turkey provided protective equipment, as well as other health equipment, to tackle the spread of COVID-19 and cared for patients in Somalia. He expects that Somalia and Turkey will have a solid bilateral trade between them.

Dr Mehmet Karakus, Director of Yunus Emre Institute, UK. Dr Mehmet's remarks focused on building better relationships between the Somali diaspora and the Turkish community. He also mentioned the Yunus Institute and how the Somali diaspora can also create platforms to share common experiences between the two cultures. He said both communities can take advantage of Turkey's support to increase mutual relationships and work collaboratively.

Abdiwali Sayid is the Executive Director of DAD Organization, Istanbul, Turkey, shared his personal experience as a student and how Somali students and alumni in Turkey have contributed to state-building in Somalia. He noted that those students are now partners who contribute to leadership positions in the Somali government. Those who went back are proficient in Turkish and they work closely with the Turkish embassy in Mogadishu. They also work on creating business sector initiatives in Turkey. He suggests that young people become ambassadors, as they are instrumental in maintaining the relationship between the two countries. Thousands of Somalis now speak Turkish, which will enhance interaction and cooperation among societies.

Dr Idil Osman, Lecturer in Media and Communication at the University of Leicester, UK, spoke about the research project she contributed to, which focused on helping refugee students and scholars continue their education. There has been a steep increase in the scholarships that Turkey provides to Somali students, rising from only 10 in the initial stages to several thousand now. She noted that Somali students receive comprehensive support from the Turkish government, which takes on a human-centred approach when it comes to their education. Her research found that many of the students had overwhelmingly positive experiences of studying in Turkey, saying that all their

requirements had been met, from academic support to tuition and grants. There is a lot of integration between Turkish and Somali students, they have formed solid relationships with their peers, and they often spend time together during the holidays. She described this interaction as having improved the language barrier and social connection between those communities. Graduates have already started contributing to Somalia.

THE SOMALI DIASPORA'S ROLE IN SOMALIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

KEYNOTE

H.E. Somali Minister of Finance, Abdirahman Duale Beyle, spoke about how the Somali diaspora has contributed to the Somali economy and state-building processes. He reflected on how Somalia's civil war affected Somalia and its people. He said that Somalia would have disappeared if the Somali diaspora hadn't taken the initiative to contribute back to the country. Somali women have also played a significant role in saving their country, as they were the pillars of our society. Somali people are considered business-minded people, and they have continued their businesses at home and abroad. This has also contributed to the survival of the country.



Image 6: H.E. Abdirahman Duale Beyle

He said Somalia is a country with vast resources, but it is hindered by poverty, conflict, drought, and famine. He mentions other countries with fewer resources that have achieved greater economic development, yet Somalia is considered one of the poorest countries in the world. He challenged the youth to find the solution for this problem.

Somalia managed to meet the International Monetary Fund (IMF), he said. Somalia expects her debts to be cleared in the next three months. He also mentioned how the Somali government made a tremendous change within a short time. He calls on the Somali community and Somali diaspora to contribute their input to the country. He ends his final remarks by calling on the Somali diaspora to come to Somalia with their investment projects, so that they improve the economic and social prosperity of their country.

He recommends the Somali diaspora to solve the following challenges:

- Create economic development in the country. The diaspora ought to invest in the country and bring development projects that will improve humanitarian needs
- Develop educational institutions. The Somali diaspora should build schools in every district to improve skills and education in the country
- Somalia needs a strong army that can control the security of the country
- The Somali diaspora and its academic scholars should come up with projects that can help Somalia and the Somali people, from civic engagement to economic development.

ENTERTAINMENT

During interval period of the online summit, entertainment was provided by two well-known Somali performers and artists. Musician **Aar Maanta** performed music with his band, while poet **Ifrac Mansour** recited inspiring cultural poetry for the audience.



SUMMARY

The Somalia diaspora has so far made tangible progress in addressing the environment and the people. Aside from the ongoing development process, the government in Somalia with the help of the diaspora, are taking some steps in countering environmental issues. The Somali youth, both in Somalia and elsewhere are faced with multiple difficulties, whether it's education, violent crime, or irregular migration. However, the wider Somali community recognises that they must be included in the greater progress of the Somali people. The Somali-Turkish relationship is clear evidence of the positive progress Somalia has made for the last few years.

The relationship between the two countries is in good stead, as Turkey has improved Somalia's economic development, security, education sector and health care institutions. The scholarship opportunities in Turkey for Somali youth have also attracted the Somali diaspora to invest in Turkey. The Somali diaspora has multiple challenges including violence and cultural imbalance in the diaspora, with the youth requiring capacity building skills and civic leadership training.

Participants in the summit have presented challenges that affect society due to environmental degradation, as well as providing possible solutions, much of this in the form of policy programs and raising awareness. The political representation of Somali women is an issue in the country, belonging to a wider conversation about the way Somali society sees women and girls and the opportunities afforded to them in their own country. Rethinking our attitudes towards gender and the importance of women in the political landscape is something we ought to consider greatly in the coming years.

Although the youth are faced with many problems, they are also willing to play a role in rebuilding their homeland. The Somali community, both in the homeland and the diaspora must cultivate opportunities for the youth to excel in their endeavours, so that they become fully contributing members of society.

CALL TO ACTION

- The Somali government should work to improve environmental challenges, economic development and health care for women and children
- Youth require capacity building skills and skills-based initiatives that can help them engage civic leadership
- Opportunities to empower women and the youth should be systemic and universal
- Parents and children should work together to improve the cultural gap in the new diaspora
- Women should also showcase their talents, challenge stereotypes, and work collaboratively
- The Somali Diaspora must bring development projects that centralise education, the economy, and ways of improving security for Somalia
- Continual dialogue between the Somali diaspora is essential for progress and development

PEOPLE, PARTICIPANTS AND PERFORMERS

HOSTS

- Dr. Suad Mohamed
- Ibrahim Baffo

QURAN RECITATION

- Maher Al -Yamani

OPENING CEREMONY

- H.E. Somali Prime Minister, Mohamed Hussein Roble
- Somali Minister of Youth and Sports, H.E. Hamza Said Hamza
- Director General for Overseas Promotion and Cultural Affairs, H.E. Ambassador Deniz Çakar, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Somali Ambassador to Turkey, H.E. Jama Abdullahi Mohamed
- British Ambassador to Somalia, H.E. Ben Fender OBE
- Speaker of Southwest State Parliament, H.E. Amb. Ali Said Faqi
- President of Yunus Emre Institute, Professor Şeref Ateş
- Mohammed Abdiker, IOM's Regional Director for East and Horn of Africa

DIASPORA YOUTH AND VIOLENCE

- Moderator: Jamal Mataan, Refugee/Migrant Social Advisor, Austria
- Dr. Shahid Yamin Executive Chairman and Co-Founder Global Opportunities Commercialisation Pty Ltd ('GOC'), Australia
- Abdibasid Ali Mohamed, Behavior Analyst, Psychotherapist (CBT), Master NLP Coach and a family and Adolescent counsellor, Norway
- Ahmed Yare, Youth Activist and Motivation Speaker, UK
- Naciimo Hared, Chair of Mother and Child Welfare Organisation, UK
- Abdi Hussein, CEO of Hidaayah House and Community Mobilizer, Canada

DIASPORA YOUTH: LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND SENSE OF BELONGING

- Moderator: Nimco Noor, Member Board of Directors Global Somali Diaspora (GSD), Finland
- Prof. Ali Jimale. Chair and Professor of Comparative Literature at Queens College and the Cuny Graduate Centre
- Yasin Abdullaahi, Somali-Swedish politician and language teacher, Sweden
- Iman Togane a Somali-Canadian author who specializes in dual language learning for children, Canada
- Burhan Ismail A public Speaker and Motivational Speaker based in Somalia, Kenya

- Eng. Abdullahi Aden Businessman/ founder of Somalia Culture Victoria, Australia
- Hussein Abdulle (Wadad), teacher and author of the book Godob and Galad, Sweden
- Mohamed Diini, Islamic Scholar, founder and Executive Director of Mogadishu Book Fair, Somalia

YOUTH AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

- Moderator: Hamdi Sheikh, Member Board of Directors, Global Somali Diaspora, Sweden
- Dr. Idil Abdi Osman, Director of Media Communication, Leicester University, UK
- Hassan Buraale, The Head of German Somali Community, Germany
- Mowlid Abdi Hussein, youth Activist and Former Vice President of Somalia Student Society, Malaysia
- Khadija Mohamed, Legal officer, Corporate Affair and Company Secretary Co-Founder (Northern advocacy organization), Kenya
- Aragsan Ismail, Civic Activist / Participate in the First virtual Electronic Arab Parliament Presented to Arab youth, which is the Parliament of the People, Saudi Arabia
- Abdiwahab Aden Garas Aid Founded the AID project GARAS Helping Orphans in Somalia
- Marian Abdi Hussein, Chair of The Inclusion Committee in The Socialist Left Party, Norway

HOMELAND YOUTH TAHREEB, IMMIGRATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- Moderator: Bazi Bussuri, Founder of Help Yateem Charity, Member Board of Directors Global Somali Diaspora, UK
- H.E. Ambassador Ali Said Fiqi, Speaker of Southwest State Parliament /Former EU Ambassador
- Bonnie Evans-Hills, Coordinator, UK Coalition Working with UN Office for Genocide Prevention, Global Plan of Action for Religious Leaders & Activists, UK
- Aar Maanta, Somali Artist, Former UNICEF Ambassador
- Zak Salad, British Somali Filmmaker producing a Documentary about the prevention of "Tahrib"
- Ms. Mariam Yassin Hagi Yussuf, Special Envoy on Children's & Migrants Rights, Federal Govt of Somalia

YOUTH EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

- Moderator: Samira Ali, Member of Somali PN, National Director, UK
- Omar Mohammed (Umar-Faruq), one of the Founders of Xidig Youth Organisation
- Dr. Ria Aerts, PhD in Business Economics, MS in Quantitative Analysis in the Social Sciences, and MS in Business Economics at KU Leuven, Australia
- Shoki Hayir, Teacher Political Science at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Maastricht, Netherlands

- Muna Abdullah Hagar, Graduated Medical Radiography & member in SEF (Somali Exports form), Qatar
- Fouzia Warsame, the Deputy Chief of Party – Policy, Curriculum and Government Liaison for the Bar ama Baro Program at Creative Associates International, Somalia
- Yusuf Noor, Consultant, Keynote Speaker on Business & Leadership Development, UK
- Abdurahman Nour Yusuf, the head of MAANDHIS, Somalia.

ENVIRONMENT: CIVIL CONFLICT AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

- Moderator: Ahmed Tohow, Deputy of Chair Board of Directors Global Somali Diaspora. Australia
- Eng. Dr Abdullahi Ali, Malaysia University Lecturer Transportation & Environmental Impact and Sustainability, Malaysia
- Mohamed Abdirahman Abdi, Somali Youth Volunteers for Development Association (SOYVDA), Somalia
- Yanina Dehaerne, International young Activist on Environment, Australia
- Mohamed Okash, The Head Of Innovations of Institute of Innovations, Entrepreneurship and Technology, Somalia
- Ikraam Abdiaziz Jama, Bachelor's degree in Humanities and Arts with Focus on Nutrition and Food Science, Somalia

FLOODING AND DESERTIFICATION: CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS

- Ali Ware, Chair of Federation of Somali Associations in the Netherlands, and Member of Board of Directors Global Somali Diaspora, Netherlands
- Dr Badal Hassan, Researcher, University of Helsinki, faculty of Agriculture and Forestry
- Shamsø Araweelo Sheegow, Environmental Activist, Badbaado Deegaan, Denmark
- Dr. Hamda Hassan Warsame, Associate Professor Faculty of medicine and health science East Africa University Bossaso
- Mohamed Farah, Co- Founder of Amin Ambulance, Worked UNOCHA Somalia (MoJC)

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

- Moderator: Luul Kulmiye, Member Board of Directors, Global Somali Diaspora, Norway
- Saynab Mohamed Hassan The founder of Somali Gender Movement
- Fatuma Musa Afrah, Award- Winning Activist, Freelancing Keynote Speaker, Consultant and Founder of United Action e.V. soon to be United Action WoGi e.V, Germany
- Mohamed Mahamud, Author and Founder of International platform called Somali Sideways, UK
- Dr Caisha A. Arai, Advocate for Women's Rights, Sweden

SOMALIA-TURKISH RELATIONS

- Moderator: Jawaahir Daahir MBE, Chair Board of Directors, Global Somali Diaspora (GSD), UK
- His Excellency Ambassador, Dr. Mehmet Yilmaz Turkish Ambassador to Somalia
- Dr. Idil Abdi Osman, Lecturer in Media and Communication, University of Leicester, UK
- H.E. Ambassador Jama Mohamed Aidid, Somali Ambassador to Turkey
- Abdiwali Sayid, The Executive Director of DAD Organization, a Research and developmental Organization Based in Istanbul, Turkey
- Dr Mehmet Karakus, Director of Yunus Emre Institute, UK

THE SOMALI DIASPORA'S ROLE IN SOMALIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- H.E. Somali Minister of Finance, Abdirahman Duale Beyle

PERFORMERS

- Abdi Badil, Somali Artist
- Ifrah Mansour, Multimedia Artist, USA

THE BOARD



Jawaahir Daahir
 Founder
 Chair, Board of Directors

GSD's International Conference in Istanbul, June 2019 has exceeded all of our expectations.




Lul Kulmiye
 Member, Board of Directors

Dhalinyarada oo fursado dhaxalgal ah loo abuuro waa dalagga mustaqbalka iyo jiraanka dadkeena.




Zahra Shirwac
 Member, Board of Directors

The Youth of a Nation are the trustees of posterity.




Ali Waare
 Member, Board of Directors

Deegaanka Wanaagsani Wuxuu Ka Bilowdaa Dadka Wanaagsan




Jibril Afyare
 Member, Board of Directors

Dalka waxaad wax u qaban kartaa markaad ku soo biiriso aqoon, karti, hufnaan iyo daacadnimo.




Hamdi Sheikh
 Member, Board of Directors

The service you do for others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.





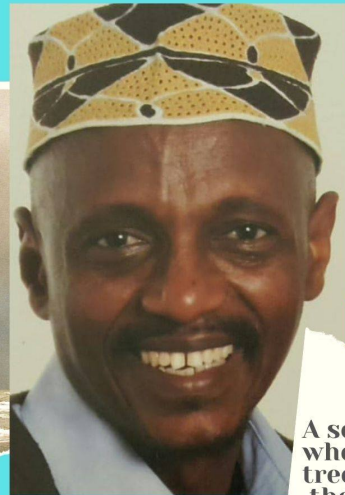
Bazzi Bussuri
Member, Board of Directors

Dhalinyarada waa hantida ugu weyn alle dalkeena ku mannaystayuna baahan in loo jiheeyo horumarka dalka.



Nimco Noor
Member, Board of Directors

Dhallinyaradu waa lafdhabarka dalka iyo dadka, waana cudud dihan oo u baahan in laga faa'iideysto ama in aan ka faa'iideysanno.



Dr. Yusuf Sh. Omar
Vice-Chair, Board of Directors

A society grows great when people plant trees they know that they will never sit under their shades.



Ahmed Tohow
Vice-Chair, Board of Directors

Do not limit your challenges, challenge your limits.

