Report of Reflection Forum and Learning Symposium on Puntland’s Democratic Transition
AGENDA
Venue Martisoor Hotel
Date 21 March 2022

Reflection Forum on Puntland’s Democratic Transition

08.45 – 09.30 Welcome Remarks and Objectives of the Forum
• Registration
• PUNSAA formally welcome participants to the forum
• Objectives and agenda of the forum is shared and adopted
• Preliminary/Opening remarks
  o Urur Kaab/FCG Sweden
  o New Access International
  o Diakonia
  o Interpeace
  o Development Counsellor, Embassy of Sweden
  o Puntland Transition Electoral Commission

09.30 – 10.15 Overview of the Puntland Democratic Transition:
• Presentation by TPEC representatives to highlight experience of the multiparty elections for three select districts

10.15 – 10.45 Q/A session
• Feedback, reflections, Q/A

10.45 – 11:00 Tea/Coffee Break

11.00 – 12.30 Presentations at plenary:
Reflections on role of CSOs in direct pilot elections in Puntland (achievements, challenges, opportunities and lessons learned)
• Presentation KAALO
• Presentation by PDRC
• Presentation by PUNSAA

Q/A session
• Feedback, reflections, Q/A

12.30 – 13.30 Prayers and Lunch Break
Acknowledgements

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to Puntland Non-State Actors (PUNSAA), New Access International (NAI) and Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC) for conceptualizing, organising and managing the forum that enabled stakeholders in Puntland’s democratic transition to reflect honestly on the success and challenges in democratic transition and deduce key lessons that would ensure the transition to fully representative democracy is complete.

This reflection forum would not have been complete without the input of the various presenters and panellists representing Puntland’s elections management body, civil society and the political associations. We are very grateful for making the time to research and prepare the various presentations or roles different institutions have played in the democratization process; thank you very much for setting the pace for what were very elaborate discussions.

We also extend sincere thanks to all the participants for making time to attend the forum and contribute to the discussions; your contributions and participation made the sessions very engaging and enriched the discussions.

Special thanks to the team of scribes/note takers and the photographers who ensured that the proceedings were fully documented; without your input, we would not have a permanent record of the forum. It would be remiss not to mention the team from Urur Kaab/FCG Sweden and PUNSAA who worked tirelessly in planning the logistics of the forum and ensuring everything went as planned.

We also would like to recognize the efforts of the Urur Kaab/FCG Sweden and NAI team in consolidating and editing this report.

This forum would not have been possible without the financial and technical support of the Delegation of the European Union.

The views expressed herein are those of the authors only.
Executive Summary

Puntland state located in northeastern Somalia was established in 1998. A transitional charter formulated and approved in 2001 stated a multi-party system would be established in Puntland and democratic elections would be held. However, it would take 23 years for this promise of democratic elections to be partially realised. Less than two months into the incumbency of the fifth president of Puntland, the administration publicly stated that it planned to organise “multiparty elections for three select districts”. The reasoning behind the pilot elections, according to government officials, was to learn from the pilot elections and address concerns and challenges going forward. On October 26, 2021, Puntland held its pilot elections in the districts of Ufayn, Eyl and Qardo. For the most part, the pilot election was lauded a success and support both locally and internationally was widespread. However, the process such as any electoral transition has had its strengths and weaknesses and more importantly lessons learned.

On March 21st, 2022, the Reflection and Learning Symposium was held with civil society, the elections management body, political associations, legislators, academia, the media and representation from the Puntland government. The various stakeholders were brought together to reflect, assess and recommend pathways to enhancing the second iteration of Puntland's electoral transition. The symposium and the participatory action research methodologies used identified key issues in Puntland's electoral transition, some a common symptom of electoral transitions in fragile states and some uniquely its own. Civic education, a term broadly used in Puntland's context for voter education as well as civic knowledge, civic skills and civic dispositions was a main concern for all stakeholders. Eleven percent of the total votes cast were faulty; given the low literacy levels and limited civic education, the percentage of invalid ballots was lower than expected. This number of invalid votes could have been much higher if the number of registered voters who turned up to vote had been higher. The poor voter turnout was largely blamed on timing of the elections as these coincided with ongoing drought conditions. The poor civic skills coupled with a population most of whom were first time voters led to noticeable gaps in voters’ civic skills.

The absence of mandated institutional frameworks to arbitrate electoral disputes that arise was a key concern for the stakeholders involved. Another key concern expressed by the participants was budgetary limitations for the elections management body, political associations and civil society. While the issue of resource constraints is a common issue with most electoral transitions in fragile or developing states, in the Puntland context, it may be construed as lack of government commitment especially when there are underlying factors. One of the main concerns brought up was that by the time the symposium took place, the Puntland government had yet to ratify the election results and allow elected district councillors to convene their duties.

There were several successes/achievements during the pilot elections, the most notable being the widespread support and enthusiasm to vote among residents. According to stakeholders, the elders, who are the major powerbrokers/gatekeepers in the society threw their weight behind the transition to participatory democracy characterised by elections through universal suffrage and this contributed to the success of the pilot elections. Signifying the transition of power from old to young, was the youth turnout, who constituted close to sixty percent of the voters in the pilot election. This would
not have been possible if there wasn’t credible coordination between the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC) and civil society coupled with the youth’s desire to take part in shaping their government.

At the elections body level, there was consensus that TPEC maintained neutrality throughout the process, and this contributed to the process being seen as credible and legitimate by all the parties.

The success of the Puntland pilot election was largely due to the commitment of all stakeholders in establishing a successful outcome. Despite the Puntland government’s delays in swearing in the district councillors, support and hope for the process was resolute. Nevertheless, the stakeholders recommended solutions that if implemented would be key to improving the democratization process. Amongst the recommendations made include:

1. Effective coordination between civil society, TPEC, government and political associations. This consultative environment was key in constructing a solid foundation for the fully representative electoral transition to transpire. As Puntland prepares to conduct district elections throughout Puntland, there will be need for extensive consultation and coordination. Such coordination and cooperation will require the Puntland government and TPEC to exhibit an unwavering commitment to sustaining the integrity of elections throughout.

2. The integrity of the electoral process will be guaranteed in an environment where there is certainty in policy and legal frameworks governing the elections. While Puntland has made notable headway on establishing legal frameworks that cover campaign finances, voter laws, political associations and other aspects, many crucial aspects remain unclear including what legal framework and body will regulate electoral disputes. The Puntland authority and TPEC together with the legislature will need to develop frameworks and designate judicial bodies that will arbitrate electoral disputes that may arise. The political association will be crucial in this regard by bring motions to parliament on the review of the legal and policy framework to address existing uncertainties.

3. Address institutional weaknesses within the political associations, civil society and the elections management body.

4. Financial constraints are a crosscutting issue and a major roadblock to optimal performance by all the stakeholders. There is therefore need for innovative approaches to mobilising resources needed including seeking support from the diaspora, private sector and development partners. There is also need for the government to commit to allocating adequate resources towards the electoral process; budgetary allocation and timely allocation especially to the elections management body will incentivise other stakeholders to support the democratisation process.

5. Civic education or more specifically voter education is of highest importance. To ensure the capacity of the public to fully take part in the transition, voter education campaigns that are dynamic in their modalities and platforms used will need to be scaled up. This will reduce ballots that are invalidated as well as allow for the public to fully comprehend the democratic process including the role of political parties and what they should expect of the political class.
Abbreviations and Acronyms

CSOs  Civil Society Organizations
EMB  Puntland Elections’ Management Body
EUD  European Union Delegation
FCG  Finnish Consulting Group
LGE  Local Government Election
MMS  Multimedia Messaging Service
NAI  New Access International
OPOV  One-Person One-Vote
PDRC  Puntland Development Research Centre
PEC  Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC)
PUNSAA  Puntland Non-State Actors
PVT  Parallel Vote Tabulation
TPEC  Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission
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1. Introduction

On 21 March 2022, Puntland Non-State Actors Association (PUNSAA), New Access International (NAI), Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC) and Urur Kaab, an EU-funded technical support to civil society organizations program implemented by FCG Sweden, co-hosted a one-day reflection and learning forum on Puntland’s democratic transition. The purpose of the reflection and learning forum was to assess progress made by the federal member state Puntland, in transitioning from indirect, electoral college, clan-based electoral system to a universal suffrage, direct, one-person one-vote (OPOV) system; what lessons have been learnt in the process; the benefits that universal suffrage/OPOV system has over the clan delegates model used in Somalia; and finally what needs to be done so the elections in the entire region (Puntland) and eventually in Somalia are held through universal suffrage. Specifically, the forum was to reflect on the role and experiences of key elections stakeholders including TPEC, political associations/parties, civil societies during the pilot universal suffrage elections held in Qardo, Ufayn and Eyl districts in Garowe, Puntland in October 2021. The forum brought together civil society, the elections management body, political associations/parties, legislators, academia, the media and representation from the Puntland government.

The objectives that the conveners of the forum sought to achieve by the end of the learning and reflection forum include:

- Gather the perspectives of elections stakeholders in Puntland including civil society, elections management bodies, political parties/associations, media, academia and government agencies on the pilot universal suffrage elections in Qardo, Eyl and Ufayn; in particular, assess the progress to universal suffrage and benefits it confers when compared to the previous indirect, clan based, elders driven elections model
- Identify the role civil society played in the universal suffrage/OPOV elections
- Identify good practices adopted by the CSOs in support to Puntland’s democratisation with a focus in the pilot elections in the three districts
  - Assess challenges (internal and external) that were encountered in the transition towards democratisation and how the civil society have contributed towards addressing these
  - Understand the readiness of Puntland civil society in addressing upcoming challenges
  - Identify the support needed in order to enhance effectiveness of civil society in contributing towards Puntland’s transition to democracy
2. Methodology/approach in facilitating the forum

Once there was consensus amongst the conveners of the forum on the objectives, the next step was selection of participants and agreeing on the agenda. Amongst the criterion for selection of participants was a requirement to have participated/contributed to the recently concluded pilot elections in the three districts of Eyl, Qardo and Ufayn; it was also agreed that in sending out the invitations to the participants, it should be emphasized that only those staff or board members that were involved in the elections should participate in the forum.

Alongside the development of the agenda was the selection of the speakers who would present the perspectives for the sector (civil society, elections management body, political associations) that they were representing.

The forum included presentations and panel discussions with the elections and democratisation stakeholders. At the end of each presentation and/or panel discussions, the moderator would facilitate inputs from plenary including questions, comments from the presenters, discussants and panellists. The input from the plenary was aimed at making sure that the discussions captured the perspectives of all the stakeholders in Puntland’s democratic transition.

To ensure relevance of the panel discussions and presentation to the objectives of the reflection and learning forum, the conveners had developed a set of questions to guide the presenters and panellists as they prepared for the forum. The questions which the presentations/panel discussion sought to answer are:

- How has your sector/institution engaged with civil society in Puntland’s democratic transition and in particular during the recently concluded pilot OPOV elections?
- What role are you aware of that civil society (has) played in Puntland’s democratic transition and in particular during the pilot OPOV election?
  - How well has the civil society engaged/partnered/collaborated with your sector/institution in supporting Puntland’s democratic transition?
  - What challenges has the civil society encountered in their support to Puntland’s democratic transition?
    - How successful have the civil society been in addressing these challenges?
- What proposals/recommendations would you make for advancing democratisation in Puntland?
- What role do you see civil society playing in advancing that democratisation and what would they need so that they are effective?

It was anticipated that these conversations would inform future engagements with civil society in the democratic transition with a view to ensuring optimal and effective contribution to the democratisation process. It was further anticipated that the deliberations at the forum would provide some useful lessons for the civil society sector as they strengthen their capacities and seek support to contribute to the advancement of a more responsive, transparent and inclusive governance system in Puntland and Somalia as a whole.
3. Deliberations
3.1. Session 1

Introduction
During this session, Puntland elections’ management body (EMB) alongside civil society organisations shared their experiences participating in and supporting Puntland transition to universal suffrage elections. This participation includes organising and overseeing the elections (in the case of the EMB) or supporting and working with EMB (in the case of the civil society actors)

Opening Remarks
The session commenced with brief remarks by the Chair of PUNSAA during which he welcomed the participants to the forum and thereafter outlined the objectives that the forum sought to achieve and relevance to civil society.

Thereafter, the Urur Kaab Team Leader gave an overview of the EUD funded Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations Program and highlighted the collaboration with PUNSAA, NAI and TPEC in conceptualising and convening the forum while the Director of NAI emphasised the role of research in good governance and development and highlighted research carried out by NAI on good governance in Somalia. Organisations that are supporting civil society in mobilising citizens to participate in governance processes were also given an opportunity to briefly highlight their support and contribution to good governance and democratisation in Puntland; these organisations included Diakonia and InterPeace. Thereafter, the Development Counsellor at the Embassy of Sweden in Somalia highlighted Swedish Government Commitment to supporting Somalia’s transition to full democracy and challenged the civil society to honestly reflect and learn from the reflection forum so that their contribution to democratisation can be more effective. The Chair of the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission wrapped up this session by broadly laying out TPEC’s mandate, how it interfaces with civil society and thereafter officially opened the forum.

3.1.1. Reflections by Transitional Puntland Elections Commission (TPEC)
The Transitional Puntland Election Commission (TPEC) was established by an Act of Puntland Parliament in the year 2012. It is mandated by the law establishing it to organise, facilitate and oversee all aspects related to democratic elections in Puntland including registration of voters, registration of political associations, manage and conduct local government elections and subsequent to the first local government elections, register the first three political parties.

Since the establishment of Puntland State of Somalia in 1998, elections have been held through an indirect, electoral college model whereby delegates selected by clan elders elect the people’s representatives to the local/district, state and federal legislatures. The year 2021 was watershed in transition towards elections

1 As stipulated by the Puntland Electoral Commission law, the three political associations that win the most votes in local council elections will become political parties
by universal suffrage in Somalia when the TPEC held pilot elections in Eyl, Qardho and Ufeyn. In preparations for these elections, TPEC carried out a voter registration exercise in which 46,839 eligible persons were registered as voters in 55 polling stations spread across the three districts. The elections were lauded as being free and fair and hence providing a much-needed confidence booster in the elections management body. It is with a view to sharing lessons learnt during the entire elections cycle that TPEC made a presentation at the reflection forum and learning symposium on Puntland’s Democratic Transition. The presentation by the elections’ management body highlighted the following.

### 3.1.1. 1. Achievements

#### 3.1.1.1 Civic Education
- Under article 8 of Puntland’s Electoral Commission Law, TPEC is required to educate the voters on elections processes and procedures including requirements for registration as a voter as well as the voting process. In furtherance of this mandate, TPEC carried out the following activities during the electoral period.

  - Development of voter and election procedures/process education and information materials
  - Planning, implementing monitoring of voter and elections procedures education and awareness raising campaigns; this included coordinating with other state and non-state actors including international stakeholders in delivering the civic and voter education
  - Monitoring voter and elections education campaigns and forums to ensure accuracy of the information being disseminated.

- The conduct of civic and voter education was necessary even prior to the commencement of the voter registration exercises since for most of the eligible voters, this was the first time that they would be electing their representatives. It was thus necessary for the citizens to be informed on requirements and eligibility for registration as a voter as well as on what to expect on the voting day.

- Amongst the media/approaches that the elections management body deployed in its civic education initiatives include traditional media (including radio and television which are estimated to respectively reach 82% and 55% of the population) as well as new/social media (it is estimated that 73% of the population have access to a phone with 49% of these being smart phones; 95% of those with smart phones are social media users and hence social media is an effective way of awareness raising amongst this demographic)
3.1.1.2. Successes
Notable successes that were realised by the elections management body with regard to the conduct of civic/voter education include:

- Greater and better/improved coordination with civil society and other stakeholders
- Number of votes that were invalidated made up 11% of the total votes cast; considering the low literacy levels amongst the electorate, this is considered and achievement
- The youth were enthusiastic about participating in democratic processes and constituted 59% of all voters

3.1.1.3. Challenges
The challenges that TPEC experienced in managing the pilot/universal suffrage elections include:

- Time allocated for the preparation of the elections was not sufficient, especially in light of fact that this was an inclusive/OPOV process
- The election period coincided with drought and the attendant shortage of pasture and water for livestock and domestic use. This resulted in the seasonal migration by the nomadic pastoralists; such movement make it difficult to conduct civic education and also results in low voter turnout
- Low literacy levels especially in rural areas and amongst nomadic communities make the delivery of voter/civic education more challenging
- Limited funding: the civic and voter education outreach activities did not have specific budgetary allocation
- While there were no reported incidences of violence during the elections, the overall security situation needs to be improved so that the elections can be conducted more efficiently in a secure environment
- It has been difficult to ensure full inclusion and participation of certain demographics such as persons with disabilities
- The number of elective positions won by the opposition political associations is higher than the number of seats won by the ruling political association. This has resulted in some reluctance by the administration to swear in and inaugurate the newly elected local government representatives. When the government of the day demonstrates reluctance to follow through on its obligations regarding the elections possibly because the outcome did not favour it, this may undermine the democratisation process.

3.1.1.4. Opportunities
From the foregoing challenges, several opportunities arise; these include:

- Having successfully organised the pilot OPOV elections, TPEC has acquired experience and expertise in elections management that it can lend to other elections management body in Somalia; further, applying the lessons learnt from the pilot elections, TPEC is now better placed to
manage the elections in the rest of Puntland

- The people of Puntland expressed great enthusiasm for direct elections; this presents an opportunity that should be seized and elections in the rest of the state conducted before this optimism wears out
- There was good cooperation with other stakeholders including local and international development partners; such cooperation is necessary and should be maintained to ensure fully inclusive and representative democracy takes root in Puntland; such cooperation and partnership can be for technical and/or financial assistance purposes
- The funding gap represents a threat to TPEC work; while the Government of Puntland is the principal funder, it is necessary to diversify funding so that all aspects of the electoral process including civic education are fully supported

3.1.2. Reflections by Civil Society Organisations

As was observed by the election management body, one of the key stakeholders that TPEC collaborated with were civil society organisations especially in conduct of civic and voter education as well as observing the elections, both pre and post voting days. To capture the role, experiences, successes and lessons learnt by civil society during the pilot elections in the three districts in Puntland, presentations were made by representatives of Puntland Non-State Actors Association (PUNSAA), KAALO and the Puntland Development Research Centre (PDRC).

Here below are the key highlights of the contributions by the three organisations representing the civil society sector

3.1.2.1. Role of Civil Society Organisations

- Civil society’s role in Puntland’s democratic transition predates the recently concluded universal suffrage elections. Since the establishment of the Puntland State, the non-state actors have consistently called for more inclusive and representative governance system in which the political leadership is directly elected and accountable to the people. The recent universal suffrage elections in Eyl, Qardo and Ufayn are an outcome of this intense campaign by the non-state actors.
3.1.2.1.1 During the pre-election period, the roles that civil society have played included:

- Advocacy for the development, finalisation and enactment of the election laws and procedures. This included convening and facilitating consultations with various stakeholders including traditional leaders, government, media, political associations, the elections management body, among others.
  - Working in collaboration with TPEC the civil society organizations:
    - Contributed towards the development of the elections strategic plan and roadmap for the local government elections.
    - Contributed to the criteria for determination of the electoral districts.
• Contributed to the terms of reference and composition of the elections dispute resolution committees
• Contributed to the vetting and registration of political associations
• Capacity building for TPEC
• Civic and voter education including support in distribution of voters’ cards as well as observing the voters’ registration process

• **3.1.2.1.2. On the elections/voting day and in the post-election period, the roles played by the civil society included the following:**
  • Deploying trained observers to all the polling station and observing the electoral procedures including opening times, conduct of poll officials and political party agents including the assistance to those voters who required assistance
  • Monitoring the counting, tallying and transmission of the results
  • Observing and documenting any action(s) that may constitute a breach of elections procedures and hence affect the credibility of the elections

### 3.1.2. Observations by the Civil Society

• There were satisfactory levels of transparency with the chairpersons of the polling stations opening the station, closing the stations and beginning to count the votes casts in the presence of political associations and candidates, observers and the polling staff
• Results of the elections were announced by the chairpersons of the polling stations in the presence of representatives of political associations; these results were verified by the representatives of the candidates and political associates by them signing against the results declared
• The voting took place in a largely peaceful environment and there were no noted incidences of violence
• Turnout was generally low with up to 38% of the registered voters not turning up to vote; this is attributed to the elections coinciding with seasonal migration by the nomadic pastoralists’ communities (see under challenges observed)
• Approximately 12% of the votes cast were invalidated (this figure is close to the 11% announced by TPEC); this makes it necessary for efforts to increase reach and coverage of civic and voter education initiatives
• A significant proportion of the electors were youthful with voters below 35 years comprising 59% of the registered voters

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2 It is not clear if the civil society had separate mechanisms (such as parallel vote tabulation or PVT) for ascertaining the number of votes cast, those valid and those spoilt or relied on the figures presented by the elections management body.
3.1.2. 3. Factors facilitating successful local government elections

The civil society presentations included a brief analysis of factors that contributed to the success of the pilot universal suffrage elections. Amongst these factors include:

- There was demonstrable commitment on part of Puntland government to hold universal suffrage elections and be seen as trailblazer in the wider Somalia context.
- The state (Puntland) had experienced long periods of relative stability, and this made conduct of elections by universal suffrage possible.
- The elections management body (TPEC) was largely seen as credible and neutral; this strengthened the confidence of the opposition political parties in the polls body.
- Security agencies are largely depoliticised and their likely non-interference in outcomes of electoral processes boosts confidence in electoral processes.
- There was demonstrable commitment and enthusiasm from the public for a transition for the clan based electoral system to a system based on universal suffrage; this enthusiasm was particularly noticeable amongst the youth who were eager to vote for the first time in their lives.
- Concomitantly with the support from the populace, the elders had expressed a desire towards a more inclusive and participatory electoral system.
- There were adequate and on time preparations for the process.

3.1.2.4. Challenges encountered by civil society in their participation in the pilot universal suffrage elections

Several challenges were noted by the civil society organisations; some of the challenges identified are similar to those that the elections management body had encountered. The noted challenges include:

- The election period coincided with the occurrence of severe drought; this resulted in movements of populations in search of food and water for both human and livestock – which in turn affected the delivery of civic education, the campaigns and the voter turnout.
- The low voter turnout occasioned by populations movement could have been mitigated by allowing voters to vote in any polling station; however, TPEC restricted voters to only vote at the polling station where they registered.
- The distribution of the voting/poll centres was disproportionate; for example, some centres had very few voters with result that the staff/officials in that polling station weren’t engaged throughout the day while other polling stations had very high number of voters resulting in long queues and voters still waiting in line at time scheduled for the voting to end.

3 Transition to the more inclusive direct elections model would wither the power and influence of the elders; it is thus necessary to determine whether their support for direct elections model.
• As a result of the disproportionate distribution of polling stations and the resulting long queues, there were incidences of voters collapsing/fainting due to the long wait; there was no provision of first aid/emergency medical facilities to deal with these situations.

• High levels of illiteracy made the conduct of civic education challenging; this also resulted in large number of voters requiring assistance.

• A concern emerging regarding assistance to voters was representatives of political associations assisting voters; this is against acceptable elections standards and compromises the integrity of the election since representative of a political association is (likely) biased in favour of his/her association.

• The public health emergency occasioned by Covid-19 limited the reach of civic education and campaigns as the civic educators and politicians attempted to limit the citizens exposure to contracting the illness.

• Limited funding to both TPEC and civil society organisations and hence the limited reach of their interventions especially civic education.

• While direct/universal suffrage election is meant to mitigate the shortcomings of the clan based, indirect election model, the political associations were still selecting candidates based on clan with the elders having significant input. This therefore calls for measures to be put in place to shield the political associations/parties from clan domination and make them truly representative. This is further articulated under the recommendations section.

3.1.3. Recommendations

Civil society made some proposals for addressing the challenges in mounting a successful universal suffrage election in Somalia context and in particular Puntland; these include proposals on increasing civil society effectiveness as a partner in the Puntland democratisation process. The proposals include:

• Scheduling the elections at a convenient time such as during the Gu’ rainy season. This would require that the TPEC works in collaboration with other agencies such as the weather/meteorological department such as to get information on weather patterns and plan accordingly.4

• Start preparations for the elections early enough; this would allow for all likely scenarios to be anticipated and measures put in place to address them.5 Early preparations would also allow adequate time for more voters to register and distribution of voters’ cards.

• Improve coordination and cooperation with other key stakeholders including civil society; better coordination will reduce duplication, ensure efficient use of resources and also enable the elections management.

4 Due to the unpredictability of the weather, it may be difficult to tell with precision when the rainy season will begin. As such, it may not be always possible to plan for elections to coincide with the rainy season especially of the elections are to be held on a regular/scheduled time. In the circumstances, it may be necessary for the elections management body to allow registered voters to cast their ballots at any polling station that is nearest to them. This calls for investment in technology that would enable voters to be identified without having to go to the polling station/centre where they were registered.

5 Early/on-time preparations are possible where resources are availed to the electoral management body early. In the circumstances, it will be necessary for TPEC to lobby parliament for regular budgetary allocation and timely disbursements.
body to have a better appreciation of what the different actors are doing – which would enable it ensure quality and standards are met/adhered to

- Ensure a better distribution of polling stations considering population, size of an electoral areas etc.

- Provide adequate capacity building for elections teams with particular focus on polling staff and the security agencies working in the polling centres.
  - As part of the capacity building, the sample ballot paper used in the civic education should, to the extent possible be used during the actual polling; this will ensure that confusion amongst the electorate is reduced
  - The capacity building should also include institutional building/strengthening for the Political Associations
  - To ensure the representativeness of the electoral systems, it is necessary for mechanisms for ensuring that the 30% quota for women is met.6

3.1.4. Lessons Learned by civil society from their participation in pilot local government elections conducted by universal suffrage

- In contexts where elections by universal suffrage have not been held before, the support and cooperation by the government (local and national) is a pre-requisite for success. It is therefore paramount that there is sufficient political will to mobilise all state actors including security agencies so that they can commit to democratic processes and to respect the outcome of these (democratic) processes

- Political stability, peace and security are a requirement for elections to be held

- Independence of the elections management body and perceptions of independence (free from interference the government and not owing allegiance to any ethnic or other affiliation) boost the credibility of the elections management body and build acceptance of the outcomes of electoral processes it presides over.

- A benefit accruing from direct, universal suffrage election is the potential for those who are excluded by the indirect clan-based system to ascend to elective positions. In the pilot elections held in the three districts of Puntland a significant proportion (over 70%) of those elected were youthful while 26% of those elected were women; such a result would not have been achieved under the indirect elections model.

- The transition to democracy can only be completed where there is commitment on part of the government to respect the outcome of the elections process and ensure those elected are provided with the opportunity to discharge their responsibilities. Since the elections were held in October 2021, the newly elected councillors had not been installed in office by March 2022, five months after the election.7

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6 One way the reservation of electoral positions for women is for the political associations to be required to nominate at least 30% women as candidates for the elective positions they will be fielding candidates in

7 To avoid the outcome of an electoral process being frustrated by any party, the law should be amended so it provides a time frame within which newly elected officials should be sworn into office and commence their duties; such a law would also need to provide clear procedures for dealing with disputes arising out of election and time frame for dealing with such disputes.
- The electoral system includes other institutions including those mandated by law to hear and determine elections disputes; in the context of Puntland, it is necessary that Supreme Court Judges are appointed on a priority basis (to hear and determine elections disputes), preferably before the universal suffrage elections are held in the remaining districts of Puntland.

- It is necessary for the stakeholders to identify lessons learned in the conduct of the pilot one-person-one vote elections, consolidate and document these; such documentation would form the basis of the review of the elections law to ensure that these lessons are incorporated.

- The political associations are not very well known, and these have not yet articulated their vision to the electorate. It is thus necessary that these associations to popularise themselves (identity and manifestos) to the electoral, Considering the low levels of education, it would also be necessary for the parties to adopt symbols that the electorate can easily identify (with)
3.2. Session 2

3.2.1. Introduction

During this session, political associations\(^8\) shared their experiences on the pilot universal suffrage elections in Puntland; the session also highlighted achievements and challenges by the political associations in their contribution towards more representative democracy in Puntland, their engagements with civil society and their proposals on strengthening democracy in Puntland.

The names and symbols of the political associations that participated as panellists in the discussion are here below.

The panel discussions took the form of the moderator posing a series of questions on Puntland democratisation and the role of the political associations; the panellist would respond to these questions with the participants also getting an opportunity to seek clarifications or make observations based on the responses by the panellists. The questions that were posed to the panellists were:

- How do we deal with misinformation/misleading statements by political associations, the issue of corruption and politics and protect the associations from being capture by elites/patronage networks?
- What are the challenges faced by the political associations; is there role civil society can plan in helping to address these challenges?
- How can political associations be funded and at the same time maintain their independence?
- Should the elections in the remaining 47 districts be conducted at once or should these be held in phases?

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\(^8\) Ibid. 1
3.2.2. Observations by representatives of political associations and responses to the questions posed by the moderator

There was consensus amongst the representatives of the political associations that there is low understanding of democratic process including how political associations work amongst the citizens. This is partly as a result of the limited reach of the campaigns mounted by the political associations, which is further attributable to:

- Limited funding
- Political associations are recently established and hence have limited institutional capacity
  - There was limited time since the establishment of the political associations and the elections time and hence the associations weren’t able to adequately publicise themselves to the public
- A significant proportion of Puntland’s population is in the diaspora, and they have gained understanding of political parties in the countries they live in work; it would thus be paramount for the association to seek to recruit members in the diaspora who can support in building these associations
- As all the political associations have candidates were elected during the pilot elections, they need to continuously hold the government accountable for the swearing in an inauguration of the newly elected members of the district councils
- Regarding corruption and its effect on democratic transition, TPEC indicated that while corruption has potential to undermine democracy, addressing it is a responsibility assigned to other government mandates such as the police, courts and anticorruption bodies; it is however worth noting that there is no anti-corruption agency in Puntland.
  - Despite the assertion by the elections management body that it does not have the mandate to address corruption, issues of political associations ‘treating voters’ through giving gifts and digging wells/boreholes was raised as concern since some of the political associations were engaging in such practices. As the regulation of political associations is a responsibility of the elections management body, it is necessary that TPEC addresses the issue comprehensively so that it does not recur in the future.¹¹
  - Other issues, in the view of the political associations, that may stall the process towards democratisation are absence or weak institutions; for

"As all the political associations have candidates that were elected during the pilot elections, they need to continuously hold the government accountable for the swearing in an inauguration of the newly elected members of the district councils"
example, courts do not function as required, there is no constitutional court or court designated to arbitrate election disputes and absence of anti-corruption institutions means that there are no established institutions (outside of TPEC dispute resolution mechanism whose mandate is rather limited) to deal with election disputes.

### 3.2.3. On challenges that the political associations encountered during the recently concluded elections, these include:

- Knowledge on political associations is limited and during the campaigns, the citizens expected some incentive (cash, foodstuffs, etc) from the politicians. This points to the need to undertake interventions to raise awareness on role of political associations.

- Limited funding; as noted in the civil society reflections session, the political associations are newly established and hence do not have access to the resources needed to popularise themselves and develop strong internal systems and processes. Due to fact that they are recently emerged, the citizens have yet to fully grasp the idea of being members of a political association and paying membership/subscription fees.

- While the Puntland government initially demonstrated commitment to the democratic process, this seems to have waned as demonstrated by the failure to swear in the newly elected members of the district councils; this failure on the part of the government risks undermining the progress made and casts doubt whether responsibilities will be transferred to the officials elected when the elections are held in the remaining 47 districts.\(^\text{12}\)

- There are no independent institutions for resolving election disputes; while there is TPEC internal dispute settlement processes, this should not be utilised in circumstances where one wants to object to the results declared by TPEC. The constitutional court is yet to be established yet it has the mandate of settling elections disputes; this failure to set it up is also indicative of waning commitment to the democratisation process on part of the government/administration.

- On increasing awareness amongst the citizens on political process, voting procedures and popularise political associations, the following proposals were made.

  - Civic and voter education should be held over a long period and not only when the elections are about to be held. To facilitate voter education a voter education fund should be set up and the young people, especially those at the university deployed to conduct civic awareness; this would not only raise awareness but also contribute to addressing unemployment.

  - The civic and voter education process needs to be alive to the context it is being delivered; for example, since literacy levels are low, the educators should consider using symbols to raise awareness on the parties rather than names and logos.

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\(^\text{12}\) As noted in footnote # 8, one way of addressing the delay in inauguration of newly elected officials is to put in the law the timeframe within which newly elected officials should be sworn in and hold their first meeting. This would prevent decision on assumption of office from being at the discretion of an individual.
• Related to context, diverse approaches should be used including radio, mobile phone message, drama, music and poetry.

• To ensure that Puntland has good leadership, the content of civic education should include qualities of a good leader; people should be encouraged to have reasons beyond clan/ethnic affiliation as reason for voting for a candidate.

3.2.4. On issues of access to financing for political associations, there was consensus amongst the representatives of the political associations that they did not have adequate resources and hence their reach in popularising themselves has been limited and this is has impacted developing necessary internal structures/processes for effective functioning. To address the funding shortfall, various proposals were made, including:

• The government can set up a fund to support political associations; this will ensure that associations do not become beholden to an individual or entity but to the citizens of Puntland whose resources/taxes fund the political associations.

• Although current political associations do recruit members and require them to take out a subscription (payable once or annually), this recruitment will need to be enhanced through campaigns and better communication of the associations’ political ideology. The fees will need to be set at a rate affordable to the targeted members and also make the leadership of the political associations more accountable to the people.

• Other modalities suggested for funding political parties was securing funding from donors; however, it was not clear whether this would compromise their independence (would they for example advance the interest of the donor if they get to power) and what incentives would the donors have for funding the political associations.

3.2.5. On whether the elections in the remaining 47 should be conducted at once or in a phased manner, the elections management body stated that it was ready to hold all the elections at once and was awaiting the Ministry of Interior to set the schedule for the elections; it (TPEC) expressed optimism that the experience in managing the elections in the three districts put in position to conduct elections across the entire Puntland state. However, this view was not unanimous as there were concerns as to whether there are enough resources to enable elections to be conducted at once. Other views expressed were to the effect that it is premature to talk about elections in the remaining districts while the current Puntland administration was beginning to grow cold feet over the democratisation process as demonstrated by its failure to swear in the local government councillors elected in the pilot elections.

It also emerged that there are disputes over the district boundaries, and these would need to be resolved before the elections can be held; according to this panellist, there are currently no institutions in place to address issues of electoral and administrative districts’ boundaries disputes.
4. Overall observations, conclusions and recommendations

4.1. Observations and conclusions

4.1.1. Civil society contribution towards Puntland’s democratisation predates the recently held local government election; it (civil society) has conducted advocacy towards more representative democracy characterised by universal suffrage elections. The recently concluded elections are an outcome of their advocacy efforts; these efforts have included lobbying for elections to be held by universal suffrage, contributing to development of legal framework on direct/universal suffrage elections as well as working collaboratively with the elections management bodies to ensure that the elections processes are efficient and credible.

4.1.1.1. The efforts by the CSOs in contributing towards Puntland’s democratisation have not been well documented. It is thus necessary for civil society to institutionalise the culture of documenting its contributions towards social change.

4.1.2. It is necessary that better coordination mechanisms are put in place; this would allow TPEC as the body responsible for the overall management of the elections process to have a bird’s eye view of what all the actors working on elections related matter are doing. This not only reduces duplication and enhances efficient use of resources but also allows the elections management body to ensure that the interventions by the various actors meet the requisite quality standards.

4.1.2.1. A way of enhancing coordination is by signing memoranda with actors involved in electoral process; such memoranda would outline what an agency/organisation would be doing, the location, duration and target group(s). Furthermore, enhancing communication and information by creating a comprehensive information desk or database that is publicly available will help coordination and optimize efforts.

4.1.3. Determination on when elections can be held is at the discretion of the Ministry of Interior. While this was in order with respect to the first election by universal suffrage, this discretionary decision making on such an issue may undermine democracy especially the requirement for regular elections. Also, now knowing in advance when elections will be held leave stakeholders in a limbo as to when to begin preparations. It is thus necessary that decision on date of elections in subsequent elections is determined by law.

4.1.4. Conduct of elections that are seen as credible and meeting requisite standards of free and fair elections requires cooperation and coordination amongst various institutions including law enforcement and dispute resolution mechanism. That there is no elections/constitutional court is a major gap since a person dissatisfied with decision made by the elections management body is left without recourse. This makes the case for establishment and/or operationalisation as well as strengthening of institutions such as elections/constitutional court urgent.
4.1.5. As at the time of the reflection forum, 5 months after the elections, the elected officials were yet to assume office, a factor attributable to failure by the Ministry of Interior to designate a date for their swearing in, inauguration and induction. This is another discretionary power of the Ministry of Interior which may pose a threat to full transition to democracy. It would thus be preferable if the timeframe within which elected officials are sworn in and inaugurated is determined by law/legal framework.

4.1.6. Civic education is a process that should continue in the period in between elections and not be limited to the elections. This will increase levels of civic consciousness and reduce the pressure to conduct civic and voter education within tight timeliness around the elections.

4.1.7. Funding remains a challenge for the elections management body, the political associations and the civil society. In the circumstances, it becomes necessary to pursue multiple income streams with the funding for TPEC and political associations being largely provided by government so as to ensure the independence of these institutions. Various funding options have been considered in preceding sections of this report.

4.2. Recommendations
(Most of these recommendations have been articulated in great detail in the preceding sections of this report; they are reproduced here for emphasis and clarity)

4.2.1. Government of Puntland to consider allocating adequate resources to ensure that elections are conducted in an efficient manner. Resources should be allocated for, amongst others:

4.2.1.1. Meet the TPEC requirements for conducting the elections

4.2.1.2. Funding for political parties

4.2.1.3. Support to civic and voter education

4.2.2. In addition to funding by the government, the elections management body and civil society should clearly identify areas where they need support and seeking funding from development partners.13

4.2.3. Review the legal framework on elections to address the following, among others:

4.2.3.1. Time within which those elected are sworn in, inaugurated, inducted and responsibilities for managing the local government transferred to them

4.2.3.2. Determination of elections day so as to reduce potential for abuse of discretionary powers currently enjoyed by institutions that decide when elections will be held

4.2.3.3. Clearly define actions that would constitute elections offences and allocate responsibility for enforcement of the elections’ legal frameworks.

13 As has been observed in preceding sections of this report, funding of political parties by businesses, donors, etc is not desirable as perceptions of bias and favouritism may arise especially once such a political party is in power; questions would arise as to whether it is capable of resisting overtures by its funders should they seek to influence policies and decisions in their favour.
framework. This would include allocating powers to the TPEC dispute resolution mechanisms to impose sanctions such as fines or debarment of candidates and/or parties who are found to have violated elections code of conduct

4.2.4. Establish and/or operationalise institutions that would complement the elections management body to ensure the credibility and integrity of electoral processes. These would include establishing or designating elections courts, establishment of anti-corruption agencies as well as investigatory and prosecutorial agencies

4.2.5. Continuous institutional strengthening/capacity building on elections management of all institutions playing a role in the electoral process including:

4.2.5.1. The elections management body
4.2.5.2. Political associations
4.2.5.3. Civil society
4.2.5.4. Law enforcement agencies including
4.2.5.5. Police and other investigatory agencies
4.2.5.6. Prosecutorial agencies
4.2.5.7. Judiciary
5. About the conveners of the learning and reflections forum

5.1. About FCG Sweden and Urur Kaab

FCG Sweden is a leading international development organisation with vast experience in delivering high quality programmes and projects in public sector reform, natural resources management, civil society strengthening, market development and monitoring and evaluation. FCG Sweden is 100% owned by Finnish Association of Local Governments, a not-for-profit association that supports local and international development work of Finnish Local Government authorities.

At FCG Sweden, we provide context relevant, evidence-based solutions that meet and exceed our partners’ expectations. We combine the agility of private sector and rigour of international development organisations to deliver development solutions that are innovative, scalable, adaptable, high impact and sustainable. We work consultatively with our stakeholders to build solutions that are inclusive (ensuring that the voices of the most marginalised and disadvantaged are heard), participatory (engaging all the stakeholders in the decision-making process) and sustainable (building resilience to help people steer the direction of social, economic, legal, political and environmental change). We are currently implementing technical assistance to civil society programmes in Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Turkey, Ukraine and Western Balkans. Previously, we have implemented civil society strengthening programme in Somaliland.

FCG Sweden is headquartered in Sweden and has offices in Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Kenya, New Zealand, Singapore, Somaliland and Somalia.
5.1.1 About Urur Kaab/Technical Assistance for Civil Society Capacity Building in Somali and Somaliland Programme

This is a three-year (January 2020 – January 2023) programme funded by the Delegation of the European Union to Somalia. The purposes of the programme are to:

“Strengthen the capacity of CSOs working in governance and democracy sector to mobilise Somalia/Somaliland citizens to participate more effectively in democracy and governance reform processes through representation, participation, transparency and accountability”

The technical assistance to civil society capacity building programme is based on the realisation that civil society has an essential role to play in facilitating dialogue within and between communities, promoting civic engagement in governance and democracy, observation, reconciliation and healing around elections and implementation of national developments.

To enable the civil society effectively to play this role, Urur Kaab implements interventions to address four core elements of civil society capacity. These are: 1) Organisational and management capacity; 2) Constituency relations; 3) Technical know-how; and 4) Collaborative synergies.

5.2. About Puntland Non-State Actors Association (PUNSAA)

Puntland Non-State Actors Association (PUNSAA) is a non-profit, non-governmental forum that assembles non state actors into one platform/network. Its mission is to provide multi-sectoral and impartial platforms for coordinating members to continuously engage in tripartite dialogue with government and the international community through advocacy, lobbying and coordinating of the various sectors of NSA. The organization was established in May of 2008 in Garowe to provide a forum through which local NSA could participate in and influence policy and decision-making processes at local, state, regional and international levels.

PUNSAA brings together its diverse members to hold-based consultations on key issues related to peace and development in Puntland. These consultations then form the basis of the policy recommendations that the organization makes to international community and the government of Puntland. The organization’s thematic areas include but are not limited to the following: inclusive governance, human rights, aid effectiveness and service delivery.

5.3. About New Access International (NAI)

New Access International (NAI) is a development agency established in 2012. NAI is a grass-roots organization that provides beneficiary-specific and tailored services to public and private institutions involved in a range of developmental issues in Somalia.

In 2013, NAI carried out the Voter Education Project funded by Interpeace and TPEC. In implementing this project, NAI utilized the ubiquity of mobile phones and created educational cartoons which educated citizens on, among others: voting process, the importance of voting; rules and regulations of voting. This campaign was implemented via animated MMS via Bluetooth that would be shared widely
across mobile phones and social media. A tollfree hotline providing real time voter education to callers from all over Puntland was also established, recording over 1,500 callers in the first two weeks. NAI was able to reach 40,000 persons in two weeks of civic education messages.

NAI has a distinct focus in providing locally grounded research, analysis and practical recommendations to fit the needs of its clients working in an array of thematic areas in Somalia. NAI’s practitioners are experts in providing specialized development services to both stakeholders and beneficiaries.

NAI is underscored by a nexus of aptness and innovation because the needs of the community and wider public in Somalia require these approaches to ensure that development is sustainable, impactful and locally driven.

5.4. About Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC)

Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC) was established in 2012 with a mandate to oversee democratic transition of Puntland state. TPEC is responsible for the following processes: management and conduct of local government election (LGE); registration of political associations; registration of citizens eligible to vote; registration of the first three political associations following local government elections. After all these processes are concluded, TPEC will pave way for a permanent Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC).
6. Annexes

6.1. Forum Concept Note

Concept Note for Reflection and Learning Symposium with CSOs on Puntland Democratic Transition

Background

On 27 March 2019, Interior Minister for Puntland Hon. Dhabanad stated that the new Puntland government planned to organise “multiparty elections for three select districts”, with the aim of learning how to conduct direct, one-person-one vote elections from this process.\(^1\) This statement was made within two months after the fifth Puntland presidential elections, which since 1998 has been decided through an indirect process. At the time of Puntland’s establishment, the fledgling region designated itself a state though the country (Somalia) was yet to adopt a federal system. A transitional charter to govern the newly established administration was formulated and approved in 2001 and amongst its provisions was a declaration that Puntland is a democratic state in which multiparty democratic elections would be held on scheduled basis.\(^2\) It would take 20 years for that goal to be partially achieved.

Less than two months into President Deni’s incumbency, the intention of becoming a multi-party democratic state was restated as central to the administration’s agenda. It is with a view to realising this aspiration that the process of reconstituting the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC) was commenced with the collective resignation of its members in June 2019\(^3\), ostensibly to pave way for reigniting the stalled democratisation process. In August 2019, a new electoral commission was named and the former Puntland Minister Guled Salah was elected as its chairman; this was a notable accomplishment for the new administration since it was the first Puntland administration to nominate the electoral management body (TPEC) in its first year in office.

In December 2019, TPEC published its elections plan for the following two years to December 2021. Amongst the items in the elections plan was the registration of political associations/parties, registration of voters and holding the elections. The process of registering political associations commenced shortly thereafter and by

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\(^2\) Article 12 of the Puntland Transitional Constitution. Available at https://www.refworld.org/pdffd/4bc589e92.pdf

April 2020, 17 political associations had been registered though this number would progressively be reduced to 12 and finally 9 through mergers and consolidations.

Registration of voters commenced in mid-May 2021 and by the time the process was coming to a closed in June 2021, 48,353 voters had been registered in the districts where the pilot elections were scheduled to be held, i.e., Ufayn, Eyl, Qardho. The pilot elections were held in October 2021, with the process being described as largely free and watershed in Somalia's progress towards democratisation and elections by universal suffrage. Approximately 29,000 voters, out of the over 48,000 registered voters participated in this ground-breaking pilot elections. The majority of the seats in the three districts were won by three political association with the ruling association (Kaah) winning 35 out of 87 district seats while Mideeye and Justice and Equality were the runners up.

The conduct of the pilot universal suffrage elections was an opportunity for the elections management body to identify good practices and learn lessons which would inform the conduct of subsequent elections in Puntland in particular as well as in entire Somalia. Additionally, the pilot elections by universal suffrage were an opportunity to demonstrate value of having people directly elect their representatives since persons who would otherwise not have been elected through indirect/electoral college processes such as youth, women and minority communities got elected.

To understand the context in which Puntland’s pilot elections were held, it is important to analyse processes occurring both in the periphery and centre while assessing government capacity, commitment and inclusion of civil society actors.

**Status of current process**

Progress towards democratic transition in Puntland seemed to falter following the resignation of the TPEC Chairman and Deputy Chairman; however, the electoral commission nominated Abdirizak Ahmed as Acting Chairman while the Puntland’s government released a statement reiterating its commitment to the democratic transition. Despite these assurances, the proposed swearing into office of the

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4. [https://unsom.unmissions.org/international-partners-welcome-local-elections-puntland](https://unsom.unmissions.org/international-partners-welcome-local-elections-puntland)
6. Ibid
7. Acting Chairman Elected by TPEC. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/TPECPuntland/status/1477932680427749376?

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An EU funded project implemented by a consortium led by FCG
councillors elected in October 2021 has been stalled by the Puntland Ministry of Interior stating that it would designate a date in the near future for the swearing in. The ratification of the election results and formal transfer of authority to the political associations has yet to take place; it appears that the democratic transition in Puntland has been overshadowed by the contentious national election which occupies the foremost priority for Puntland’s leadership.

**Objectives of the Forum**

With a view to appreciating the role Puntland civil society has played in the transition to democracy and with emphasis on the role of CSO in the recently concluded elections, Puntland Non-State Actors Association (PUNSAA), New Access International (NAI) and Urur Kaab, the EU funded technical assistance to civil society organisations programme implemented by FCG Sweden will convene a 1 day forum in Garowe in mid-March 2022. The forum, which will draw participation from civil society, legislators, political associations, academia, the media, the elections management body and representation from the Government of Puntland will be an opportunity for learning and reflecting what role civil society played vis-à-vis other elections’ stakeholders, what are some of the successes that were noted and what lessons should be learnt from the pilot elections. This would inform strategies for future engagement to ensure optimal and effective participation of CSOs and their contributions towards democratisation in Puntland.

The objectives of the are:

1. Gather the perspective of the Puntland civil society on the overall pilot local council elections in Puntland

2. Understand what role civil society has played in the pilot elections
   a. Identify good practises adopted by CSOs in support to the democratisation process
   b. Assess challenges (internal/external) that were encountered in transition towards democratisation and how civil society has contributed towards addressing these challenges
      i. Understand the readiness of Puntland civil society in addressing the upcoming challenges
   c. Identify support needed to enhance effectiveness of civil society support to democratisation

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9 Puntland Ministry of Interior Delays Swearing in of District Councillors. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/Puntlandmirror/status/1496376842152095749?s=20&t=5HAsS47MCJwqe0q8IaypQ

An EU funded project implemented by a consortium led by FCG
Methodology

The forum will take form of presentations and/or panel discussions with stakeholders in the electoral and democratisation process who engage(d) with civil society including civil society, political parties, legislators, the electoral commission and executive arms of the government. The presentations/panel discussions would be followed by a moderated discussion to raise additional points or seek clarification.

The questions that would be answered by the panellists/presenters include:

1. How did your sector/institution engage/partner with civil society in the recently concluded elections in particular and in Puntland democratisation in general?

2. What role are you aware of that civil society (has) played in the pilot elections in journey towards democratisation?
   a. How successful has the civil society been in engaging with your sector/institution and in supporting Puntland’s democratisation?
   b. What challenges have civil society encountered in their support to democratic process?
      i. How successfully have civil society been in addressing these challenges?

3. What recommendations would you make to increase the effectiveness of civil society in supporting democratisation process in the future?

Outputs of the reflection and learning forum

At the conclusion of the 1 day forum, clear and actionable recommendations will be made on steps necessary for increasing the effectiveness of CSOs contribution towards Puntland democratisation process. The recommendations, which will be contained in a forum report will be accompanied by an action plan with clear timeliness and responsibilities for the implementation of these recommendations.
### 6.2. Agenda

**AGENDA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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| 08.45 – 09.30 | Welcome Remarks and Objectives of the Forum | • Registration  
• PUNSAA formally welcome participants to the forum  
• Objectives and agenda of the forum is shared and adopted  
• Preliminary/Opening remarks  
  • Urur Kaab/FCG Sweden  
  • New Access International  
  • Diakonia  
  • Interpeace  
  • Development Counsellor, Embassy of Sweden  
  • Puntland Transition Electoral Commission |
| 09.30 – 10.15 | Overview of the Puntland Democratic Transition: | Presentation by TPEC representatives to highlight experience of the multiparty elections for three select districts |
| 10.15 – 10.45 | Q/A session | Feedback, reflections, Q/A |
| 10.45 – 11:00 | Tea/Coffee Break |  |
| 11.00 – 12.30 | Presentations at plenary:  
Reflections on role of CSOs in direct pilot elections in Puntland (achievements, challenges, opportunities and lessons learned) | Presentations by CSOs and reflections on their reports before, during and post the pilot direct elections in Qardho, Eyl and Ufeyn  
  • Presentation KAALO  
  • Presentation by PDRC  
  • Presentation by PUNSAA | • Feedback, reflections, Q/A |
| 12.30 – 13.30 | Q/A session |  |
|             | Prayers and Lunch Break |  |

An EU funded project implemented by a consortium led by FCG
Report of Reflection Forum and Learning Symposium on Puntland’s Democratic Transition

13.30 – 14.30 Panel discussion:
Political associations share experiences on direct elections in Puntland (achievements, challenges, opportunities and lessons learned)

- Practices adopted by political associations in (pilot) direct elections and supporting Puntland democratic transition
- Challenges (internal/external) that political associations faced during the process and challenges that lay ahead
- How political associations propose to address challenges to ensure democratisation is sustained in Puntland

14.30 – 15.15 Planning for next steps
Moderator: NAI

- Stakeholders propose way forward and agree on actions needed to entrench democratisation in Puntland

15.15 – 15.30 Vote of thanks and closure

In Pictures

With the commitment of Puntland government, its people and TPEC, the democratization process of Puntland has made significant gains following the recent pilot elections in Qardho, Eyl and Ufeyn.

TPEC Chairman Abdirisak Ahmed

Reflection Forum on Puntland’s Democratic Transition

Civil Society - Electoral Commission and Political Parties Perspectives

In Pictures
AGENDA

Venue
Martisoor Hotel

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21 March 2022

Reflection Forum on Puntland’s Democratic Transition

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  - Interpeace
  - Development Counsellor, Embassy of Sweden
  - Puntland Transition Electoral Commission

09.30 – 10.15
Overview of the Puntland Democratic Transition:
- Presentation by TPEC representatives to highlight experience of the multiparty elections for three select districts

10.15 – 10.45
Q/A session
- Feedback, reflections, Q/A

10.45 – 11:00
Tea/Coffee Break

11.00 – 12.30
Presentations at plenary:
Reflections on role of CSOs in direct pilot elections in Puntland (achievements, challenges, opportunities and lessons learned)
- Presentations by CSOs and reflections on their reports before, during and post the pilot direct elections in Qardho, Eyl and Ufeyn
  - Presentation KAALO
  - Presentation by PDRC
  - Presentation by PUNSAA
- Q/A session
  - Feedback, reflections, Q/A

12.30 – 13.30
Prayers and Lunch Break
**Reflection Forum on Puntland's Democratic Transition**

Civil Society, Electoral Commission and Political Associations Perspectives

**Venue**
Martisoor Hotel

**Date**
21 March 2022

**Time**
08.45 – 10.15

**Session**
Welcome Remarks and Objectives of the Forum

- Registration
- PUNSAA formally welcome participants to the forum
- Objectives and agenda of the forum is shared and adopted
- Preliminary/Opening remarks
  - Urur Kaab/FCG Sweden
  - New Access International
  - Diakonia
  - Interpeace
  - Development Counsellor, Embassy of Sweden
  - Puntland Transition Electoral Commission

**Session**
Overview of the Puntland Democratic Transition:

- Presentation by TPEC representatives to highlight experience of the multiparty elections for three select districts

**Session**
Q/A session

- Feedback, reflections, Q/A

**Session**
Tea/Coffee Break

**Session**
Presentations at plenary:
Reflections on role of CSOs in direct pilot elections in Puntland (achievements, challenges, opportunities and lessons learned)

- Presentations by CSOs and reflections on their reports before, during and post the pilot direct elections in Qardho, Eyl and Ufeyn
  - Presentation
  - KAALO
  - Presentation by PDRC
  - Presentation by PUNSAA
- Q/A session
  - Feedback, reflections, Q/A

**Session**
Prayers and Lunch Break

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**In Pictures**

TPEC’s effort to promote women representation is an example for others to follow

Johan, Swedish Embassy/FBA

With the commitment of Puntland government, its people and TPEC, the democratization process of Puntland has made significant gains following the recent pilot elections in Qardho, Eyl and Ufeyn

TPEC Chairman Abdirisak Ahmed

Dadaalka dhalinyarada puntland wuxu dhalay in golayaasha deegaanka sadeexda degno u yahay lambarka ugu badan dhalinyaro

Ilbaan, PYAN Chairman

Doorashada geleyaasha deegaanka waxa ay Puntand u leedahay muhimadi waran, maaduuna ay tahay talaabadi lagu beegaya maxay nidaamka ku saabsan habka awood qaybba beedaha hoogaas suurayo nidaamka tartanka xisbiyeeda badan.

Agaasimada Hadii-gaasha Dacaan ugu caddeyda (FGO)