

**Promoting Dialogue and Peace in Somalia:  
Building Capacity and Strengthening the Somali Civil Society  
International Conference. Rome, February 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> 2008**

**THE ROME STATEMENT  
written by members of Somali Civil Society**

We, members of the Somali Civil Society Organizations, scholars, activists and members of Somali diaspora have gathered in Rome to share our concerns, compare experiences to develop and plan shared vision and strategies aimed to promote peace and dialogue in Somalia.

The members of the Somali Civil Society, scholars, activists and members of diaspora whom have participated in this conference have expressed their concerns about the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the continued violence in Somalia. They have identified constraints and opportunities for a lasting peace and dialogue and the important roles the Somali Civil Society can play.

After four days of discussion, deliberation and networking, we, members of the Somali civil society, scholars, activists and diaspora, issued the following:

**1. The humanitarian crisis:**

- We call upon the International Community, the Somalis in the diaspora, and the Somali Business Community to immediately respond to the humanitarian crisis in Somalia by providing adequate humanitarian assistance to those affected by both current armed conflict and natural disasters.
- We call upon all the warring groups to facilitate access and guarantee the flow of humanitarian assistance to the needy.

**2. Reconciliation and dialogue:**

- We believe that the Somali conflict can be resolved only through peaceful means. Therefore, we call upon all warring parties to end their hostilities and engage in a dialogue to resolve their political differences and respect the rights of our people to peace and justice;

- We welcome, support and encourage all reconciliation efforts that will lead to a lasting peace in Somalia
- In order to create environment conducive to reconciliation, we call for the withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops and their replacement with a neutral AU/UN troops;
- We also strongly believe that only a Somali-owned reconciliation process can build and create a lasting peace in Somalia and we therefore urge the international community to support and facilitate an inclusive reconciliation process with an emphasis on gender representation;

### **3. Human rights:**

- We call for the end of the culture of impunity in Somalia;
- We also call upon the United Nations' Human Rights Commission to appoint a fact finding mission to investigate the atrocities that have been perpetrated against innocent civilian population;

### **4. Roles of Civil Society in creating an environment conducive to promote peace, strengthen and consolidate the public institutions:**

- We recognized that the Somali civil society to play effective roles in reconciliation and dialogue, we should establish a common civic agenda, a common voice and vision for a durable peace;
- We call upon all Somali civil society members, scholars, activists and members of diaspora to work together and join their efforts for bringing peace in Somalia;
- We believe, it is pivotal that the Somali civil society members, Somali scholars, activist and the Diaspora, to facilitate structural dialogue at all levels of the Somali society.

### **5. Coordination and partnership between the Somali civil society, Scholars, activists, the Diaspora and international Community to promote dialogue and peace in Somalia:**

- We call upon the international community to adopt a genuine partnership with Somali civil Society based on mutual trust which promotes equal access to information and resources;
- We urge the Somali diaspora to share their skills, knowledge and resource towards the realization of a successful reconciliation and sustainable development in Somalia;

- We, members of the Somali civil society, recognize the importance of forging networks and linkages between ourselves and other national and international actors;

#### **6. Strengthen the Somali civil society**

- We recognize the need to begin towards the creation of Somali civil society forum which will bring together members of civil society in and out of Somalia that can promote peace and dialogue in Somalia;
- We agreed upon the formation of a follow up committee that will oversee the implementation of the above recommendations;

Finally, we wish to extend our thanks and appreciation to INTERSOS, Italian Government, and Italian-European Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for hosting the international conference of the Somali Civil Society Organizations in Rome, Italy, on February 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Rome, February 8<sup>th</sup> 2008