Report on Healthy and Sustainable Food in Somalia

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Submitted to: UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment

1. **Please provide examples of ways in which the environmental impacts of the global food system are having adverse impacts on human rights. Adversely affected rights could include, among others, the rights to life, health, water and sanitation, food, culture, livelihoods, non-discrimination, a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and Indigenous peoples’ rights.**

A confluence of factors has created an exceedingly complex humanitarian crisis in Somalia which has adversely impacted on the rights of Somali people in terms of basic living conditions including access to food, water, sanitation and basic healthcare services. More specifically, in terms of food security

up to 2.7 million people across Somalia are expected to face food consumption gaps loss of livelihood or even worse outcomes through mid-2021. In addition, approximately 840 000 children under the age of five are likely to be acutely malnourished, including nearly 143 000 who are likely to be severely malnourished. In 2019, over 4.4 million people lacked access to clean water and sanitation service; 5.5 million Somali’s lacked access to basic healthcare and over 77,000 suffered from cholera and acute diarrhea with majority of the children affected under 5 years old.

1. **How has climate change affected the global food system?**

Somalia is one of the world’s countries worst affected by global warming, suffering near-constant droughts, heat waves, and floods. Due to its proximity to the equator, there is not much seasonal variation in its climate. Hot conditions occur year-round along with periodic monsoon winds and irregular rainfall. These climatic conditions have been further exacerbated by climate change with constant droughts and floods devastating harvests and resulting in the displacement of thousands of Somalis.

In 2019, one of the driest rainy seasons in almost 35 years resulted in nearly half of the Somali population without access to food. In addition, these climate shocks have not only destroyed Somali crops and livestock but have also increased the levels of toxins in crops. Particularly, the frequent droughts, have significantly increased toxins in maize, sorghum, and wheat, the main staple foods in the country. According to scientists, Somalia is more vulnerable to these toxins because the farming systems rely on rainfall. Hence the prolonged droughts and heat due to climate change creates a conducive environment for the bacteria to grow in crops, thus damaging them

Furthermore, the drought and famine has resulted in many families losing their means to earn a living. As their livestock perish, they are left without a stable income and therefore a stable source of food.

1. **To protect a wide range of human rights, what are the specific obligations of States and responsibilities of businesses in terms of preventing, reducing, or eliminating environmental impacts caused by the unsustainable production or consumption of food? How can we shift to food systems that restore and regenerate nature rather than degrading ecosystems, while providing healthy diets for a global population that will exceed nine billion by 2050?**

It is important that states make stronger food policy decisions for the global food system. These include providing an adaptive and resilient food system that will be able to respond to changing circumstances and new challenges as they emerge. The adaptive capacity and resilience must be built into both biophysical aspects of the system (through the preservation of biodiversity, maintenance of healthy soil systems, maintenance of buffering capacity in water bodies, etc.) and socioeconomic aspects of the system (knowledge transfer, development or organizational capacity, elimination of poverty cycles, etc.). It is also important for states to ensure to ensure the supply of adequate nutrition for the world’s population. Some of the priority objectives for addressing this challenge should, at minimum, include reducing overall food demand (e.g., through reducing food waste); progressively shifting to lower-impact, less-resource- intensive food sources; ensuring that scarce resources (land, water) are allocated to food production as a priority over non-food uses; improving economic access to food; and improving farmer productivity in the developing world. In addition, it is imperative that the food system structurally supports the livelihoods and well-being of those working within it. States therefore need to address the systemic structures that perpetuate poverty as a critical determinant of achieving a sustainable and resilient food system.

1. **Please provide specific examples of constitutional provisions, legislation, institutions, regulations, standards, jurisprudence, policies and programmes that apply a rights-based approach to ensuring healthy and sustainably produced food. Please include, inter alia, any instruments that refer directly to the right to a healthy environment.**

The National Development Plan NDP is the overarching framework for development priorities in Somalia. Its major focus is on poverty reduction and is built around six pillars: peace consolidation, security and the rule of law; institution building; inclusive and sustainable economic growth (targeting the private sector and agriculture, livestock and fisheries); social and human development (targeting health, nutrition and education); infrastructure rehabilitation; and building national resilience. In addition to this, the cross-cutting themes of the plan include gender, youth, capacity development, human rights, and the environment. Currently, the 9th National Development Plan (NDP 9), to be implemented from 2020 through 2024 is intended to build upon the achievements of NDP-8 and to provide a clear path to improve significantly the economy and poverty reduction within the next five years. The NDP 9 focuses on poverty reduction through inclusivity and simplify and consolidate existing frameworks and mechanisms, including the Recovery and Resilience Framework (RRF), road maps, aid policy and architecture, and the National Reconciliation Framework.

The 2018 humanitarian response plan for Somalia has four objectives: to provide life-saving assistance, to reduce emergency levels of malnutrition, to promote protection, and to restore livelihoods. The Government and humanitarian and development stakeholders seek to reduce the humanitarian caseload and the recurrence of famine through by building strong resilience to shocks through improved food security, economic development, gender equality, increased employment, social protection, climate change mitigation, stronger early warning and disaster management, and durable solutions for displaced populations.

The United Nations strategic framework for the period 2017–2020 sets out priorities, which included with WFP contributing to resilience strengthening and socio-economic opportunities. The interim country local production, supported by local procurement, connecting farmers and consumers to markets, strengthening food quality controls and providing technical support for food fortification; rehabilitation of infrastructure related to food production and access; collaboration with the Government on programme implementation and on strengthening its capacity to develop and implement policy (food security, nutrition, social protection/social safety nets, and early warning/disaster management); provision of school meals.

1. **If your State is one of the 156 UN Member States that recognizes the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, has this right contributed to preventing, reducing, or eliminating environmental impacts caused by the unstainable production or consumption of food? If so, how? If not, why not?**

The National Development Plan in Somalia has been prepared in line with the right to a safe clean, healthy and sustainable environment as well as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with policy, plans and mitigation and adaptation projects intended to achieve the objectives of the National Development Plans. Such measures i.e. the policies and planed projects have been based on the existing realities of environment as well as climatic variability which have placed the food systems and methods under grave threat. One significant impact of this is the provision of seasonal early warning system (easily accessible and understandable) and forecasting for pastoral livelihood security and farmers food security.

1. **Please provide specific examples of good practices in preventing, reducing, or eliminating environmental impacts caused by the unstainable production or consumption of food. These examples may occur at the international, regional, national, sub-national, or local level.** Examples may involve monitoring food quality; guaranteeing procedural rights (e.g. public access to food information, public participation in decision-making about the environmental impacts of producing or consuming food, access to remedies); new technologies; legislation, regulations, standards, jurisprudence and policies that address the environmental impacts of the food system; and initiatives to achieve healthy and sustainably produced food (e.g. halting land conversion for agriculture, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing air and water pollution, supporting agroecology, agroforestry, organic farming and closed-loop aquaculture, increasing efficiencies, promoting healthy and sustainable diets such as plant-based, and avoiding food waste). Where possible, please provide evidence related to the implementation, enforcement, and effectiveness of the good practices.

The Somali Agriculture Technical Group (SATG) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating sustainable agriculture in Somalia using practical and scientific homegrown solutions. Some of their work the preservation of seeds specifically connected to the Somali culture, the improvement of production techniques for higher yields, as well as the training and collaboration with numerous people at the local, regional, national and international levels. A noteworthy example is the reappearance of the Filsan mungbean. The Filsan is a superior variety of mungbean characterized by high yield potential, larger seed size, early maturity, and better cooking qualities compared to local varieties. For these reasons it is a staple in the country. The Filsan was originally introduced by Bonkaay Dry Land Agriculture Research Station. However, the collapse of the Somali government meant that the introduction of the Fislan on a large scale was halted. Between 2002-2005 the SATG together with the World Vegetable Centre in Taiwan, the Somali Agronomist’s Association and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics in Nairobi, were able to develop and distribute over one ton of Filsan seeds to farmers in the middle and lower Shebelle regions who continue to grow the crop.

In addition, by actively pushing for the spread of knowledge and the goal of independence for farmers, the SATG has provided farming machinery and training modules on how to maximize produce from land

The training modules provide full of information on the plant being grown, how it should be cultivated and how to keep it producing for as long as possible. The SATG also provides informational booklets on specific pesticides that should be used to protect plants from harmful pests.

1. **Please identify specific challenges that your Government, business, or organization has faced in attempting to employ a rights-based approach to address the environmental impacts of food systems and the consequences of these problems for human rights.**

Frequent droughts, poor infrastructure, persistent insecurity, weak regulatory and enabling institutions, severe environmental degradation of the country’s rangelands and forested areas, as well as acute vulnerability to extreme weather events and Climate Change has resulted in widespread losses to assets, income and livelihoods which pose a challenge in attempts to employ a rights-based approach to address the environmental impacts of food systems. For example, despite the sustained, large-scale humanitarian food assistance and government support since July 2020 which have mitigated the magnitude and severity of food insecurity, up to 2.7 million people across Somalia are still expected to face food consumption gaps, loss of livelihood or even worse outcomes through mid-2021 in the absence of humanitarian assistance.

1. **Please specify ways in which additional protection is provided (or should be provided) for small-holders and populations who may be particularly vulnerable to unhealthy and unsustainably produced food**. How can these populations be empowered to produce and consume healthy and sustainably produced food?

Food systems in Somalia have great potential, however, there is currently a lack of sufficient investment and support to ensure that nutritious food is available and attainable to vulnerable populations. It is therefore important to adopt a comprehensive approach which will focus on the improvement of local production, storage, fortification, food quality and safety standards, and market access, as well as rehabilitating major infrastructure to support the availability of nutritious food in Somali markets and build an equitable food system that is resilient to shocks. Nutritionally vulnerable populations will benefit from improved governance and increased capacity of the private sector capacity to improve nutrition through support for standards on food fortification, food quality and safety. The NDP also strives to improve access and scale up the delivery of essential nutrition services with a focus on children, women and other vulnerable groups and strengthen the national and local capacity to deliver evidence-based and cost-effective nutrition interventions.

1. **There is substantial evidence that the actions of high-income States (e.g. high levels of meat consumption, excessive calories, and food waste) are linked to adverse effects on food availability, food quality and ecosystem health in low- and middle-income States. What are ways in which high-income States should assist low-income States in reducing the environmental impacts of food systems while promoting healthy and sustainably produced food?**

Nutritionally vulnerable populations will greatly benefit from improved government capacity to establish and maintain public food reserves which will inadeptly improve the availability of food. Smallholder farmers, farmer cooperatives and private sector producers will also benefit from the rehabilitation of major infrastructure as well as shared knowledge of market information systems that will improve food supply chains and the availability of food. High income states can therefore strengthen the capacity of low-income states i to adopt a comprehensive approach which will focus on the improvement of local production, storage, fortification, food quality and safety standards, and market access, as well as rehabilitating major infrastructure to support the availability of nutritious food in low-income markets (in this case Somali markets) and build an equitable food system that is resilient to shocks.

1. **For businesses, what policies or practices are in place to ensure that activities, products, and services across the entire food system (production, processing, distribution, marketing, retail, food loss and waste) achieve healthy and sustainably produced food and meet human rights standards, especially those articulated in the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights?**

The Somalia National Food Fortification Strategic Plan aims to ensure compliance to standards and regulations at industry and commercial levels; scale up consumer awareness and behavior chang, ensure surveillance of food consumption as well as enhance production of high-quality fortified food.