

SOMALI INITIATIVE

FOR

DIALOGUE AND DEMOCRACY

(SIDD)

'THE VANGUARD OF UNITY, JUSTICE AND SOLIDARITY'

Review of Developments 2005

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Photos by David Channer, Fiona Leggat, Isabelle Merminod, Peter Riddell

Summary of Developments in 2005

Building on the association of prominent Somalis concerned for national reconciliation with *Initiatives of Change International (IofC)* since 1991, and following a year of weekly meetings throughout 2004 with IofC's Agenda for Reconciliation (AfR) team in London, Osman Jama Ali, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas and Abdi Afrah Gure launched an initiative to promote reconciliation among Somalis in the diaspora and in Somalia.

February/March 2005

30 senior Somalis, former government ministers, civil servants and journalists, representing all the clans, met in three workshops on *The future of Somalia - Building trust and confidence*. A broad consensus was achieved on *the causes of the collapse of the Somali state, the reasons for the failure of successive peace conferences, and the priorities for the future*. A decision was taken to create an organisation, *Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD)*, to carry forward the recommendations.

August

Ten of the participants were selected for a programme of training in *Conflict Transformation, Dialogue and Reconciliation* in the context of a conference, *A world in crisis – learning from one another how to be peace-makers*, 13-19 August 2005, at the IofC International Conference Centre at Caux, Switzerland. They were joined by a delegation of six nominated by Hon. Ali Mohamed Ghedi, Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, and three other participants from the Somali diaspora communities in Sweden and Switzerland.

One significant development was a conversation that developed between prominent figures who had been supporters of the United Somali Congress (USC) and leaders of the Benadiri people. This led to an apology being offered by the former, which was accepted by the latter.

October

Some of the participants reported on their experiences to Hon. Sharif Hassan Sh. Aden, the Speaker of the Somali Parliament at a reception in London.

November/December

Fifteen of those who had participated in these meetings were selected for five further day-long training sessions in London in the skills of Facilitating Dialogues.

Background

The sustained association of Somalis with *Initiatives of Change (IofC)* began in 1991 when two Somalis of different clans, Ahmed Hussen Egal and Hassan Mohamud, who were refugees in Sweden, became reconciled as a result of their encounter with it.

In this new spirit, at IofC's international conference centre at Caux, Switzerland in 1993, Egal and other Somali participants drew up a list of potential peace-makers from different clans. Thanks to the support of the Swedish Nordic Africa Institute and IofC, nine of them met in Sweden in January 1994, and committed themselves to work for a long term process of reconciliation and forgiveness. They included General Abukar Liban, Dr Yusuf Omar Al-Azhari, Eng. Osman Jama Ali, and Omar Osman and Mrs Anab Hassan.

Among those who have joined them since are Nurta Hagi Hassan, a prominent lawyer and social worker, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas, a pioneer of Paediatric Medicine and Preventive Health in Somalia, Deputy Minister of Health in the Transitional National Government and Chairman of the UK United Somali Benadir Council, and Abdi Afrah Gure, Secretary of the Somali Mental Health Association in London and a founder of an 'umbrella' group of Somali organisations in West London.

Osman Jama Ali, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas and Abdi Afrah Gure began to attend the weekly *Agenda for Reconciliation (AfR)* meetings in London in the spring of 2004, and the two latter attended the AfR 'Peace-building initiatives' conference in Caux, Switzerland, in August 2004. Osman Jama Ali went to Kenya to participate in the latter stages of the Somali peace conference, and was a candidate in the presidential elections. On his return, AfR hosted a briefing for him which was attended by Members of the Houses of Commons and House of Lords and civil servants from the Foreign Office and Department for International Development (picture below).



Workshops in London

In February and March 2005, three meetings on the theme, *The Future of Somalia: Building Trust and Confidence* took place at IofC's London centre. Thirty leading Somalis, including former government ministers, diplomats and journalists, representing all the major clans, participated. They achieved consensus on the *Reasons for the collapse of the Somali state, the failure of previous peace conferences, and priorities for the future*. Sir Jim Lester, former Conservative Member of Parliament, chaired the first meeting (picture below).



A decision was taken to establish an association, *Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy* to implement the proposals. A Steering Group was appointed to summarise the conclusions and carry the process forward. Its members were: Dr Ahmed Abbas (Chair), Mohamed Abukar H. Omar, Ahmed Farah, Anab Hassan, Abdirahman O Osman, Yusuf Ali, M. M Gure.

Summarised conclusions:

Reasons for the collapse of the Somali state and the failure of previous peace conferences

- 1) *Causes for the collapse of the Somali state:* Injustice, absence of political systems, agendas of external forces, ignorance and lack of common national interest.
- 2) *Reasons for the failure of all previous reconciliation conferences:* They were not initiated by Somalis, were poorly-planned and managed, the participation was unrepresentative, they were held outside the country, and there was no process of reconciliation.
- 3) *Strategies to transform Somali society from clan-based allegiance to policy-based allegiance:* Overcoming clanism requires education, and the promotion of justice and reform within the family's attitude. Leaders should not be elected because of their clan, but on merit and political programme. Clan-based power-sharing (4.5) is not realistic and will create more problems than it solves. The need is to promote genuine democracy through strengthening civil society, professionalism, education and equal opportunities.
- 4) *Strategies for initiating the reconciliation process at District, Regional, and National level:* The clans are not at war with each other, but clan leaders are creating a hostile environment. Reconciliation is paramount, and independent facilitators who can bring different groups together at District, Regional, and National levels are necessary. The National Council for Reconciliation has an essential role in promoting a real

reconciliation. The admission of guilt (and seeking for forgiveness) is vital in order to overcome the current situation. A truth and reconciliation commission on the South African model should be established.

- 5) ***Steps in the democratisation of Somali society:*** Political parties, human rights organisations and other voluntary organisations are important in order to promote democracy and empowerment.
- 6) ***Steps towards the equitable distribution of power, economic resources and social opportunities:*** Power needs to be defined first. Research and census can identify the components in power sharing. In order to attract the most experienced experts in every sector, a fair system for recruiting must be established.
- 7) ***Harmonisation of efforts among Somalis in UK towards dialogue and reconciliation:*** To contact Somalis in UK, an organisation will be needed, to be named ***Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD)***. Individuals and groups who can promote the aims and objectives of the movement need to be identified. We need to start with London, then move on to other regions, such as Birmingham, Leicester, Sheffield, etc. It is vital to create a core group who are committed, who understand each other and who have the same goals and objectives. Women should be encouraged to take part.
- 8) ***Unification of Somali efforts in Europe and North America and their role in conflict resolution:*** There is a need to have centres in UK, Europe and North America with the headquarters based in UK. Promoting the profile of the organisation can help to recruit members and centres around the world.
- 9) ***Establishing the desired high level of relationship between Somalia and the countries hosting the Somali diaspora:*** It is vital to establish a good relationship with host countries and their governments in each country where Somalis live. We need to promote Somali professional organisations so they can link with other professional organisations.

The way forward: Possibilities for future action

Short term

- Finalise the Constitution of *Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD)*
- Translate resource materials into Somali, such as the film, 'Freedom', the booklet 'Which Way Somalia' etc.
- Arrange training in dialogue and reconciliation techniques for members of the organisation, starting with the executive members
- Prepare an action plan
- Organise a further workshop for a larger group (60-80) of fellow Somalis in UK

Long term

- Register the organisation within 6 months
- Organise a training workshop for the civil society, parliamentarians, and selected individuals and groups (to be held in a country neighbouring Somalia)
- To organise a conference to launch the organisation and to attract more members of the Somali community in UK
- Organise trips to other countries of the European Union and North America for the advocacy of the approach of Initiatives of Change
- Organise a worldwide conference for the Somali diaspora.

Somali Initiatives for Dialogue and Democracy (SIDD)

In accordance with the conclusions of the workshops, SIDD was established '**to contribute to the creation of a stable, democratic and prosperous Somalia at peace with itself and its neighbours by creating contexts for honest conversations to heal the past and build trust for the future**'.

SIDD believes that...

- War is a fundamental cause of poverty, preventing democracy and development
- Conflicts can not be resolved unless the root-causes are identified and dealt with
- The root-causes of conflict lie in the human heart, in hatred, fear, greed and dishonesty
- Everyone can play their part in addressing these through struggling against the forces in us which are destructive of ourselves and those around us, and in favour of those forces which build our characters and communities
- Dialogue, bringing together people who have suffered at each other's hands, is an important way of helping people out of the victim mentality
- Acknowledgement, apology and restitution are an effective way of healing damage done to others and restoring relationships. To forgive does not mean to forget, but to admit that we have all fallen short, and to believe that relationships can be renewed
- Trust, the prerequisite of democracy and development, only flourishes to the degree that individuals are personally committed to the highest moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love
- Open, just and accountable structures which are the hall-mark of democracy are fruits of these values
- Reconciliation and the rebuilding of a war-torn society is a long-term process and must be pursued with determination.

Translation of resource materials into Somali

In accordance with the recommendation of the Workshops to 'translate resource materials into Somali',

- a booklet entitled *Which way Somalia?* (a translation of a widely-used pamphlet, 'Which way Africa?') has been prepared for publication. In cartoon-form, it asks Somalis what kind of country they want and what kind of attitudes and behaviour will be needed to create it.
- Exploratory work has also been done to discover what would be required to dub the African film, *Freedom* into Somali.

Both projects can be implemented when funding is available. Project proposals are available on request.

Training in Dialogue and Reconciliation

Phase 1 in Switzerland, 13-19 August

In accordance with the recommendations of the workshop, SIDD's first step was to **train Somalis in Dialogue and Reconciliation**.

Ten of the Workshops participants were selected for a training programme at the *IofC* International Conference at Caux, Switzerland. They were joined by delegates nominated by Hon. Ali Mohamed Ghedi, Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and led by Hon. Ali Mohamed Faqay, Minister of State for Fisheries and Marine Resources. There were also individuals from the Somali diaspora in Sweden, Netherlands and Switzerland.

The training took place in the context of a conference on the theme of *A world in crisis – learning from one another how to be peace-makers*, 13-19 August attended by over 400 people from 54 nations. The 20-strong Somali delegation was the biggest single group.



The Somali delegation in Caux

The main themes of the conference were: *People building peace, The journey towards wholeness, Building bridges in a multi-faith world, Fresh hope for Africa – Creators of Peace, The power of change*. The typical daily programme consisted of a Reflection on reconciliation, Plenary sessions, Community discussion groups, Workshops/Seminars and evening programmes.

Plenaries and workshops

In plenaries and workshops, speakers addressed the essential elements of reconciliation, including: forgiveness, admission of guilt, social change, transcending victim/offender cycles, differentiation between 'false' and 'true' reconciliation, and between punitive and restorative justice, different methodologies, and issues relating to venues, timing and resources. The speakers emphasised that only genuine reconciliation succeeds in the long-term, and the

importance modifying approaches that are effective in other situations, according to existing socio-cultural settings.

The causes of failure of the Somali peace-process that were identified in the London workshops were similar to the points raised at the workshop led by Canadian academic, Jessie Sutherland, on *True and false reconciliation*. Indicators of false reconciliation included hastiness, imposition and outside management, discussion of superficial issues and failure to address the real ones. True reconciliation results from an inner change of heart of which the indicators are forgiveness, acceptance, healing and transformation.

Another workshop led by Dr Barry Hart of Eastern Mennonite University, USA, focused on *Trauma-healing*. It emphasised the importance of sharing one's feelings and experience with others – 'if pain is not transformed, it is transferred'. The workshop also discussed the difference between punitive and restorative justice, and the development of grassroots dialogue within a community.



The Somalis were honoured to have meetings with His Highness Dr Ado Bayero, the Emir of Kano, Nigeria, (left) and also with Dr Cornelio Sommaruga, President of *IofC International* (below).



Dr Sommaruga described the experiences he had as President of the *International Committee of the Red Cross* when he sought to bring aid to Somalia in 1995. He said, "Can we move the Somali peace process deeper? You will have to find the solutions; we are ready to support you."

The Somali group also had the opportunity to hear and exchange views with a variety of practitioners from other African countries including Kofi Bassaw from Ghana, Abeba Baatai from Eritrea, George Achor from Sudan, Sam Pono from South Africa.

Somali presentations

The Somali delegation made two presentations to the whole conference, conducted a workshop and participated in an international cultural evening.

In the first plenary, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas introduced the Somali participants, and gave some background to the situation in Somalia, and his association with *IofC*. In the session entitled, 'Fresh hope for Africa', Hon. Ali Faqay, Minister of State, briefed the conference on the present situation in Somalia, and pledged to take the message of Caux to the wider audience in Somalia.

In the Somali Workshop, Dr Yusuf Ali and Faduma Osman made a colourful powerpoint presentation of Somalia's historical, geopolitical, economic and social background, providing an insight into the country and its people. It highlighted the achievements of the country before the civil war, and what has happened since. Dr Ahmed Abbas and Khalid Maou introduced the 'Somali Culture of Peace' – a collection of sayings related to reconciliation that are common among the Somalis, and which reveal the traditional ways of resolving conflicts.

The Somalis' contribution to the International Cultural Evening, consisted of a recitation by Anab Hassan of her own poems which highlighted the role of women in peace-building and holding the community together. And the whole Somali group gave a passionate presentation of national songs and dances, so moving the audience that many joined them on stage!



Speech by Hon. Ali Mohamed Faqay, Minister of State, Transitional Federal Government of Somalia

First of all I would like express our appreciation for the hard work and efforts being exerted to make this conference very useful. Similarly, I would like to admit that the conference has been rewarding and useful in gaining considerable knowledge and experience.

Talking about Somalia, of course the country has witnessed various conflicts within society, which have left the country without any proper government for 15 years. Recently some understanding and reconciliation has been achieved among different categories of society. I am confident that the remaining differences within the government will be eliminated hopefully very soon through dialogue and mutual understanding.



We call on the international community and agencies to support us politically and financially at this critical period. It is our conviction that through your assistance, we would be able to restore peace and stability in the region and resolve the outstanding differences within the framework of the Transitional Federal Government in a unified state. I hope our friends of *Initiative of Change International* will assist us in our endeavour to heal the trauma and conflict of our people in order to replace the agony and despair with love and forgiveness based on its principles and ideals.

Last but not least, I would like to inform the audience here present today, that I will put all my efforts to take the message of Caux back home for the benefit of the wider audience there, and pray to the Almighty that by this time next year my people will have settled their differences and achieved total stability in the country.

Personal Evaluations

Mohamed Abukar-Haji Omar, former Member of Parliament

I would like to share with you a few of the lessons I have learned during my involvement both with *IofC* in London and at the conference in Caux. One of the most important things we have learned is that there are four moral standards which remain the rock on which we need to build for reconciliation and be taken as yardstick standard for human behaviour, namely Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love.



Another important subject is that there is 'true reconciliation' and 'false reconciliation'. In the former, the root causes of the conflict are addressed. It starts with the offender transforming himself by engaging in the process of peacemaking and reconciliation, confessing his wrongdoing and starting the journey of healing the wounds. In the latter case, the perpetrator maintains the hatred and injustice within the process of negotiation without dealing with the heart of the problem.

In several of the workshops organised for the Somali delegation, the issues of offenders and victims in the Somali context were discussed. We also discussed how the Somali civil war has victimised and traumatised entire communities, where the victims have lost everything, have been traumatised and denied all their political and social rights, and the offenders have become the policemen, the judges, and the executioners.

I have known most of the members of the Somali delegation to the Caux Conference for more than two decades. However, the 12 days we stayed together at Caux provided us with an opportunity to know each other better. Our discussion focused on issues affecting the country in general and our communities in particular.

Peace must be built in the hearts and minds of people, rather than through agreements. This is not possible in Somalia because Somali intellectuals are themselves paralysed by ethnic loyalty. What is missing is for the Elders of the offending clans to initiate dialogue and reconciliation with the Elders of the victimised clans so as to create a common ground. This would break the culture of tribal pride by confessing the major offences and asking for forgiveness after having dealt with the root causes of injustice and perpetration. There is a Somali Benadiri saying that goes, 'He who mistreats you, forgive him; He who isolates you, relate to him; He who victimizes you, take no revenge'.

Sayid Ma'alow is a Somali Benadiri Elder who lived his entire life in Mogadishu. He belongs to one of the Benadiri sub-clans who are unarmed and who did not take part in the Somali civil war. He fled his country because of the war and now lives in Switzerland as a refugee. He has a very bitter memories because the USC tribal armed militias abducted his pregnant wife and kept her hostage for some period, and later made him an internally displaced person by occupying his house. This tragic event has really dehumanized and traumatised him, and as a result, he decided never to meet or talk to a person belonging to the tribe of the militia who kidnapped his wife and occupied his house.

A member of our delegation to Caux, Khalid Maou, who is a close relative of Mr Sayid, contacted him in Geneva and convinced him to come to Caux and participate in the conference and workshops on trauma-healing. He accepted the invitation and attended several sessions. Mr Sayid was affected by the painful experience of some of the participants who were also members of the victimized tribes and accepted that reconciliation between people or within the family starts with forgiveness. Consequently Mr Sayid accepted to meet with some of the Somali delegation at Caux belonging to the tribes of USC which victimized him. His discussion with them on the past traumatising events at home started and continued for a prolonged period of time.

Tribalism – the mother of all evils

It is a well known fact that there is no official population census in Somalia, and that no Somali can prove the exact number of his tribe, and as a result, no tribe can claim to be more numerous than the other Somali tribes. The Somalis who participated in the Nairobi National Reconciliation Conference were paralysed by ethnic loyalty and adopted a new Constitution for Somalia based on tribal political power-sharing.

This Constitution divides the Somali population into 4.5 tribes, meaning that the armed tribes labelled themselves the major tribes to be fully represented in the Transitional Parliament, while the unarmed tribes are considered to have less rights by allocating them 50% representation in the Transitional Federal Parliament.

It is a well-known fact that tribalism is the mother of all evils like injustice, nepotism, favouritism, tribal pride, social division, hate and killing etc., and was the major factor that led to the destruction of the Somali State. It is now very unfortunate that the foundation of the new Somalia is based on 4.5 tribal ideology which will not lead the Country to any political and social justice.

The 4.5 political power-sharing system outlined in the New Somali Constitution is a new system in the world and the majority of the Somali people do not approve it because they do not want the birth of the New Somalia to be based on a system which leads to denial, humiliation, tribal division, tribal superiority and injustice which will never lead to a sustainable peace.

Omar Salad Elmi, former Provincial Governor and Member of Parliament

The atmosphere in Caux was so tranquil and teeming with a spirit of peace and reconciliation; and we did not only learn a great deal about how to be peace-builders in our troubled country and elsewhere, but we were also deeply touched and inspired by the peaceful and honest spirit prevailing there.

That promoted us to initiate amongst ourselves a new kind of frank and sincere conversation on issues of peace and reconciliation. Although most of us had known each other for many decades, we had never had such discussions. We had individual and group discussions to evaluate one another and harmonise our views and outlooks about building peace and conflict resolution in our society. These individual and group discussions were so relieving and helpful that we have cleared a cloud of ambiguity and mistrust from amongst us. As for me, I had such discussions with Mr Mohamed Abukar Omar, Mr Khalid Maou, Mr Sayid Bakar,

Mr Abdulkadir Sheikhey and Mr Sayid Ma'alow from the victimised Benadiri communities of Mogadishu; and Mr Mohamed Ali Ahmed and Abdi-Aziz Ali Ibrahim from an armed community in and around Mogadishu. These one-to-one conversations were so significant and interesting that we not only renewed our lost and strained friendship and confidence, but gained some clearer ideas about how to approach reconciliation and conflict resolution.

The most interesting of these individual conversations was with Mr Sayid Ma'alow, a former lawyer who became chief of one of the Benadiri communities. Fourteen years ago in 1991, when civil war broke out in Somalia, he swore that he would never speak to any member belonging to a certain community whose armed militia inflicted atrocities on him, his family and community. Mr Khalid Maou, a peace-builder of Benadiri community and an old friend of mine, told me about his presence in the Conference as informal observer and the deep rancour he held.

Since I am ex-member* of the community that offended him, I decided to meet him. First, I shook his hand and I said to him 'I am an ex-member of the community whose militia committed crimes against you, your family and community, and I want to have a word with you.' After a few moments of hesitation, he replied 'Mr Khalid Maou told me that you are a sincere man and for peace, thus I will listen to you.' Then I said to him 'Although I personally disagree with the atrocities my ex-community's militia did to you, on behalf of that community I ask you to accept my apology and forgive me for that offence done to you, your family and community'. After a moment's silence, he said 'I thank you for the courage and sincerity of acknowledging such atrocities and asking for apology'. He continued 'Though I am not delegated by my community to enter talks with you, I can only accept your apology and offer you forgiveness on personal basis but it is up to both communities to come together and talk about how to resolve the problem'. Finally, as individuals, we agreed that we from that moment on should work towards reconciliation, peace and justice in our respective communities in particular and in Somali society in general.



The fact that a man who fourteen years ago swore not to speak to any one from that offender community and did not speak to one ever since, had the guts to talk to me, accept my apology and offer me forgiveness – even if only on a personal basis - was a breakthrough. I think he was inspired and seized by the truthful, honest and peaceful atmosphere and spirit of Caux which influenced not only him but the heart and mind of everyone present. This is one of the pleasant, surprise changes that often occur in

the hearts and minds of people when they are exposed to the honest, peace-loving and inspiring atmosphere such as the spirit at Caux.

I think that peace and reconciliation begins with the individual. Society is made of individuals and unless the individual rid himself/herself of hate, selfishness, dishonesty and hypocrisy, he/she cannot make peace and reconciliation in the society. If the individual subscribes to these high moral principles of love, unselfishness, honesty and truth, he/she can influence and help make people and communities reconcile and resolve their differences into a peaceful outcome. Although 14 Somali 'Peace and Reconciliation Conferences' have been held in the

last 15 years, nothing or little has been achieved. Only the 1991 Djibouti, 2000 Arta (Djibouti) and 2004 Imbagathi (Kenya) conferences have produced provisional governments. The first two withered away and the latter has fallen apart into rival factions before the ink of the signatures on the agreement dried.

Why are peace and reconciliation so elusive in our country, Somalia? I think that two basic elements which are essential are missing from the Somali situation. The first is the role of the individual who is equipped with love for humanity, unselfishness, honesty, true commitment, who takes a neutral position on the sides of the conflict, who influences other individuals and his community in peace-building and conflict resolution, and who makes bridges and networks between his and other communities. We always try to bring warring factions together especially warlords in a superficial and ambiguous way, without prior input by individuals and groups into the reconciliation process.

The second missing element is true reconciliation. All such conferences and many other fruitless peace and reconciliation attempts have failed because they were false. The stakeholders, such as traditional and religious leaders, civil society, politicians, professionals, women's groups and individual peace-activists have been excluded from the talks. For peace and reconciliation to occur, it is indispensable that the offender acknowledges his offences and asks the victim for forgiveness; that the latter gives forgiveness to the former; and that justice and restitution be addressed in the talks. Without these elements in the equation, any peace and reconciliation effort is false and hollow and will be fruitless. Therefore, Somalia needs true reconciliation.

We should also bear in mind that in political movements there are political elites of diverse qualities. In authoritarian regimes there are often hardliners and softliners, and in the opposition movements there are opportunists, moderates and radicals. Incumbent political hardliners and opposition radicals cannot make peace and reconciliation. But if the incumbent softliners and moderates of the opposition come together they can make peace and conflict resolution (e.g. F.W. De Clerk and Nelson Mandela in South Africa, etc.). Unfortunately, in our situation, most political faction leaders are hardliners or radicals (tribalists) who cannot compromise and if they do, cannot settle with it because of opportunism.

Somalia needs a true peace and reconciliation engaged in by unselfish, honest, peace-loving and committed individuals, social groups, political leaders, and all stakeholders, whereby the root causes of the conflicts are acknowledged, justice and restitution addressed in due course. Since the top-down approach has been inherently false, unrepresentative and negative, the way forward is the bottom-up approach in which peace and reconciliation can be achieved in Somalia. We as a group, the members of SIDD, with the help of the Somali people and the good-willed international community will work with you and other leaders in the STFG for peace and reconciliation in our country following this bottom-up method and principles.

If we all follow this approach, I think, peace and reconciliation will be achieved in Somalia. Thank you for your attention.

* Somali patriots/nationalists who are ashamed to identify themselves with their tribes like to use the prefix ex- as ex-member of this or that tribe, belonging to ex-tribe.

Training in Dialogue and Reconciliation

Phase 2 - Five weekly one-day sessions 12 November-10 December in London at IofC centre for 15 selected participants conducted by Lawrence Fearon and Phoebe Gill of *Hope in the Cities*, an IofC Programme

Core Curriculum for Facilitator Training

Modules:

1. What is facilitation – how does it differ from other skills e.g. training or debate
2. Logistical needs of the dialogue
3. Practice exercises around listening
4. Practice exercises around how to communicate
5. Different methods of communication – what works in each situation?
6. Practical dialogue exercises and mini-dialogues on relevant issues chosen by the participants
7. Qualities of a facilitator
8. Co-facilitation – the skills required
9. Getting to know ourselves as facilitators – understanding our emotions
10. Understanding the process of facilitation – how to take in, make sense and decide about intervention
11. Questioning – types of question, how does questioning work, how do I feel when asked different types of question. Creating questions which illicit responses from the heart and not the intellect.
12. How to manage the dialogue process
13. Dealing with challenges and conflict
14. Using silence as a tool in dialogue
15. Planning the way forward – creating an action plan.

Visit by Hon. Sharif Hassan Sh. Aden, Speaker of the Parliament of Somalia, to the London Centre of IofC, 4th October

Welcome by Sir Jim Lester, former UK Member of Parliament

Mr. Speaker,

'In my 23 years as a Member of Parliament, during 17 of which I served on the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, I have learnt of the importance of working together. I see my role, and that of *Initiatives of Change (IofC)*, as being positive but neutral. Parliaments are vital: they underpin democracy, control the government and represent the people. In the British constitution, this is made clear by the fact that the Speaker of Parliament is second only to the Queen.'



Mr Jim Baynard-Smith, a member of the AfR team, and former soldier in the British Army in the Horn of Africa



Mr. Speaker,

Nabaat! *IofC* works towards a moral and spiritual renewal in all areas of life. It evolved out of the experience of Dr Frank Buchman, American of Swiss ancestry, who realised that effective change in the world must start with the individual. It is open to all, every class, race, and faith, and encourages each person to live the core values of their own faith and to apply it to the vital issues of the day that we all face in our personal, family, and public life.

So it is a commitment to search and listen for God's Will, through that Inner Voice which we all have, as basis for common action. It presents a challenge to take the needs and divisions of our own society and to apply that new quality of leadership which emerges when there is a change in personal motivation and direction. A global non-political network which acts in areas such as reconciliation, addressing the root causes of corruption, poverty, and violence, applying the factor of forgiveness and healing. All of which, as you will readily understand, strengthens the moral and spiritual foundations for a democratic system.

Now a word about what motivates some of us British to give our time and energy to support your initiatives in this field. I was with the British Army in Ethiopia and Sudan. And having now spent more than 40 years involved with *IofC* in the Horn region, I am very conscious of the colonial legacy of inappropriate borders and systems, which were driven partly by our own narrow commercial and strategic interests - especially your frontiers with Ethiopia and Kenya - insensitive straight lines which today have caused such painful and costly wars and flows of refugees. The arrogance of attitude that went with this - the lack of respect for local advice, consultation and culture. These are wounds of history to be faced and healed, and much trust needs to be built. I would just like to register a personal commitment to this end, which I believe my colleagues all share, as we wish you well in your enormous task of nation-building - *lil siraat-al-mustaqim!*



Dr. Ahmed Sharif Abbas, former Director General of Preventive Medicine, Somalia

Hon. Sharif Hassan, The Speaker of the Parliament
Hon. MPs and friends

This is to inform you that IofC/London has assisted us in the conduct of several meetings in which past problems have been discussed and solutions explored. This has led to the establishment of Somali Initiative of Dialogue and Democracy.

Besides, we were exposed to the international Initiatives of Change conference at Caux where we benefited and gained invaluable experience in dialogue and reconciliation processes.



We left Caux with a plan of action to:

- Develop the capacity of the Somali team in the UK – including training in conflict resolution and reconciliation, organisational and management skills, fundraising and publicity.
- Organise a series of district and regional level reconciliation dialogues to promote true reconciliation in Somalia.

Our vision is building peace in hostile conditions. It is the year 2005. It is now over a decade since we left the war-filled scenes of Somalia to embrace the more peaceful British culture. We, like many Somalis, regardless of clan, endured much pain. But the healing hands of time, and being members of *IofC* has made us realise that peace can only be restored in Somalia by us, its people, learning to forgive each other's wrong doings and to reconcile in order to achieve a brighter future. Here is an emotional story that I want to relate to you which took place in Caux.

It was during a recent trip to a relative's marriage ceremony in Switzerland in April 2005 at that Mr. Khalid Maou reunited with an old friend named Sayid Ma'alow from the Benadir clan to which I too belong. As they had not seen each other for a very long time, Sayid asked him: 'So what have you been up to these days, brother?'. They started conversing about many issues and soon fell upon the situation of the Somalis. Khalid enthusiastically told him about his participation in the 'Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy'. He informed him about the organisation's objective of restoring peace in Somalia by persuading all clans to forgive each other, reconcile, and unite as a nation. Midway through telling him, Khalid observed that Sayid's facial expression changed from interest to what resembled disappointment.

Sayid asked in disbelief, 'Do you still have hope in those who raped our daughters, violated our families, and shattered our homes?' At this point, he reminded him of the abuse he was forced to tolerate from clans who hated the Benadiri. His grief poured out like a flood of emotion and his anger came back to haunt him as he recalled how members of the USC supporters had terrorised him and his family. Khalid sympathised with him but told him: 'If victims like us of such war crimes do not ever engage with our oppressors, how are we to ever reconcile?' At this he replied somewhat angrily, 'I have been neighbours with these 'offenders' in this life, but I pray to Allah that we are not neighbours in the afterlife'.

Khalid, a member of the Benadir clan himself, was amazed by this show of hostility, though he too had previously felt it towards the aggressors. However his experience of mixing with Somalis from clans whom he considered his enemies, including some from the USC supporters, he had discovered that they too had suffered at the hands of war. They too were aware of the pain they inflicted on the Benadiri people and were ready to apologise and seek forgiveness.

Khalid admitted: "I knew it would need much convincing to make Sayid forget his pains and try to forgive his perpetrators and this initial conversation was unfortunately not long enough for me to convince him, as he soon had to leave. We began to call each other regularly after I returned to London to discuss our general affairs and also the political affairs of Somalia. One day whilst talking to him on the phone, I asked Sayid if he would participate in some peace activities which would be attended by Somalis of all clans. He politely refused and told me he was not yet ready to face those whom he still considered his enemies. It was important for me to persuade Sayid that we Benadiri people had to join forces with other clans and unite to fight to restore peace into our country Somalia. After several further conversations with him, I asked him again if he would participate in future peace-talking activities with other Somalis, this time to my delight he responded that he would think about it, despite it still being hard for him to sit with those who he vowed never to even look at."

"The sense of hope I had felt when Sayid told me he might participate in the Initiative of Change programmes, grew even stronger when he actually decided to meet the Somali participants. Despite taking a vow never to speak to members of the USC clans, Sayid found the inner strength and peace within him to sit down with the other Somalis and discuss his previously suppressed feelings. One spectacular moment came when Omar Salad, the former provincial governor and member of Parliament, apologised to Sayid on behalf of his community and 'promised to work hard so that his community would apologise to the Benadiri community' and work towards returning the belongings of the Benadiris such as land and buildings which was taken from them. Sayid gladly accepted on the condition that this promise was fulfilled. This was a joyous vision to witness."

Here were two men who in the past would not converse and yet were now agreeing to work together to make peace. In that inspiring moment, all hate was erased and the purpose of fighting was found futile. This is a message to all Somali communities that peace can be restored in the country they share, by simply supporting each other and working together to diminish that frightening emotion of hate.



(Anti-clockwise from right) Sayid Ma'alow, Hassan Mohamud, Omar Salad, Mohamed Abukar, Abdo, Khalid Maou, Shoble Ali Haidar

Connection between international and personal reconciliation by Peter Riddell, member of the AfR team



Your Excellency, I am inspired by the phrase you used in your recent speech to the UN meeting of Parliamentary Speakers when you said, 'We are determined to make Somalia an African model of reconciliation and peace-making'.

We draw a lot of lessons and encouragement from reconciliation in Western Europe after the Second World War which proves that with sufficient determination and investment of resources, it can be done. *IofC* (then known as Moral Rearmament) played a significant role in the reconciliation between France and Germany.

Analysing the process which led to that reconciliation, the American academic, Joseph Montville, identified three principle elements:

- 1) Humanising relations between leaders of the principle sectors of each country;
- 2) Creating a general atmosphere favourable to reconciliation;

3) Creating structures (whether economic or social) which oblige people of different backgrounds to work together.

Regarding the first element, 'Humanising relations between leaders of the principle sectors of each country', several thousand leaders of France and Germany met in Caux in the five years after 1946, including senior politicians, industrialists, trade unionists, and intellectuals.

Regarding the second element, 'Creating a general atmosphere favourable to reconciliation', the conclusion was reached that a spiritual 'key' needed to be turned in the hearts of the Germans, and consequently much effort was focussed on the German people in the immediate post-war years in the following ways:

- Public meetings: great efforts were made to publicise the experience of people who had had a change of heart towards their enemy, notably the French politician, Mme Irène Laure, who had suffered at the hands of the Germans and who asked them to forgive her for her hatred of them - she repeated this in all the state parliaments of Germany, and in countless meetings all over the country;
- Media: a play entitled 'Hope' toured the coalmining regions which were the heart of the German economy, and 'The Forgotten Factor' which demonstrated how industrial and family relationships could be renewed; in addition there were numerous books and pamphlets published.

And regarding the third element, 'Creating structures (whether economic or social) which oblige people of different backgrounds to work together':

- the outstanding project at a national level between France and Germany was that of combining the French and German coal and steel markets - the two commodities which were essential for making weapons. This common market indicated a will not to make weapons against each other in future and the fact that this happened just five years after the third war between the two countries in less than 80 years, showed that there had been a profound spiritual transformation in the two countries in quite a short space of time. This Common Market was the foundation of the European Union.
- numerous other examples of structures which brought the conflicting parties together, such as a process of linking French and German cities, called 'twinning', which linked hundreds of thousands of ordinary people through exchange visits and the like, and which still go on.

Only Somalis will know what lessons this experience has for Somalia, but in terms of these three elements:

- Osman Jama Ali, Dr Ahmed Sharif Abbas and Abdi Afrah Gure have made a start in humanising relations between leaders by bringing senior Somalis of different backgrounds together on a common agenda; and Osman Jama has a vision of dialogues - honest, healing conversations - taking place across Somalia, involving politicians, traditional elders, women's organisations and others.
- *IofC* has resources available that have proved their effectiveness in creating an atmosphere favourable to reconciliation:
 - the film 'Freedom' is one of several films that could be relevant if it was widely available on TV, DVD or video

- a pamphlet, 'Which way Somalia?' based on a pamphlet which has been widely used in Africa, has been translated and the cartoonist, Amir Amin, has agreed to draw the pictures - if that could be widely distributed.
- There are striking examples of structures in which people of different backgrounds are working together:
 - Hassan Mohamud's work with others over two years in Galkayo has seen the establishment of a number of structures and collaboration between the two sides of that town where violent confrontation has taken place
 - Abdi Afrah Gure's work in creating an umbrella group of Somali associations in West London is a model in the diaspora.

The real passion for reconciliation has to come from personal experience. The experience that I go back to, took place when I was at school. *IofC's* message to me was that, if I wanted to be part of the cure in the world rather than the disease, I had to start with changing myself. It proposed four moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. Of course each standard revealed behaviour for which I needed to apologise or restore - the way I treated my family members, school friends and teachers, for example.

When I asked myself who did I not love, the school bully immediately came to mind. He had beaten me up and humiliated me several times. But whatever he had done to me, I felt that I should not hold bitterness in my heart. I went to his home and apologised for my bitterness. I don't think he really understood what I was saying, and I don't know what difference it made to him, but it made a big difference to me. I felt free of the bitterness, and I discovered that my fear of him disappeared. I got on a bus shortly after this, and there was a free seat next to him, and I was able to sit down and ask him how he was – something I would never have done before.

Now I see that in the world there are whole populations who are run by hatred and/or fear. This school-boy experience helped me to understand that people could be freed. I believe that what we call 'God's will' is that plan which is right for everybody – but we only find this when we cleanse our consciences.

Osman Jama Ali, former Deputy Prime Minister of the Transitional National Government of Somalia, introduces the Speaker

Osman Jama Ali, in inviting the Speaker to respond, expressed his appreciation for the fact that his election had been without corruption. He had paid nothing to the voters and his speech was hate-free and criticism-free. Osman Jama said that SIDD was neutral in regard to the differences between the two camps, and believes in '*What* is right rather than *who* is right'.



Speech by Sharif Hassan, the Speaker of the Somali Parliament

This is the first day of Ramadan. I pray God your ambitions will be fulfilled. I am grateful for all that has been said. I am thankful for what Jim Baynard-Smith has said about past history. The British government, while it may have done some wrong things, has done many good things and we are grateful. We ask him to pass on to his government that what he has said today has been heard and will be reflected on.



I will try my best to cure the wrongs. I don't say that those who have suffered should continue to suffer, but it takes time to change things. The Somali situation has some causes...the perpetrators...the victims... Once we know the problem we can find a solution and unless there is law and order in the country, there is very little we can do to make progress. There is a Somali proverb: A man has been hit by an arrow in the eye and in the buttock. Which is it better to remove first? The one in the buttock, of course, because it is best to sit down first, then we can talk! Let us put the past behind us. Let us sit down and talk.

I agree with Mohamed Abukar, after hearing what he said, but I couldn't do anything. The mischief in Somalia will not be solved in a day. We have to work with the existing interim Constitution. Ours is just a transitional government. We aim one day to elect our policy makers within the country. When that election comes, people can elect those they want regardless of clan. I will say something I have never said. One of the critical points was whether to allow the Ethiopian army to enter Somalia. Some argued that as the Country is taken over by powerful communities, why not let a bigger power enter; while others said that if they enter, they would never leave.

I share with you the ideals expressed today. From my visits to USA, Canada and UK, I observe that there is more tribalism outside the country than in it, and that tribalism in the country is often ignited from outside. Let us sit down together. The first priority is to reconcile our policy-makers. One thing we won't allow is for dictatorship to come back. I believe that Parliament is the body which should oversee the government. This structure must go ahead and be strengthened. You cannot satisfy people with money and power. You can only do it by administering justice. It is very difficult in the present circumstances. We have a charter. It will need change but it is a basis for the present. I hope we will all work together, those in the diaspora and those in Somalia, to rebuild the country for the future.

Closing remarks by Sir Jim Lester

Sir Jim Lester thanked the Speaker for what he said. He also thanked all the speakers for what had been a valuable experience. It had been very moving, and he hoped it would cause people to reflect on how important it is to move ahead and for Somalia to return to the family of nations.

List of people who participated in any part of the programme

DR AHMED SHARIF ABBAS	Chairman, UK Somali Benadir Council; Pioneer of Paediatric Medicine in Somalia, Director General of Preventive Medicine for 10 years, Deputy Minister of Health, TNG
KHALID MAOU ABDULKADIR	Editor and publisher of KASMO (fortnightly Somali language newspaper), Deputy Chair, UK Somali Benadir Council; formerly lecturer in Faculty of Journalism, Somali National University
MR MOHAMED MUKTAR ADDE	Businessman
DR HUSSEIN ALI AHMED	Economic advisor to the Foreign Minister; former Mayor of Mogadishu
FADUMA OSMAN AHMED	Mental health practitioner
MR IBRAHIM AINGAL	Businessman
ENG. OSMAN JAMA ALI	Government Minister (1973-89), Deputy Prime Minister TNG (2000-03)
MR YUSUF OMER ALI	Dean, Institute of Sciences, Somali Academy of Science & Arts; Chairman, Anglo-Somali Society
DR YUSUF MOHAMED ALI	Former member of Technical Staff, Jazira Steam Power Plant; doctorate in Marine Biology
MR AHMED AWALEH	Businessman
AHMED ABDI DAHIR	Chairman, Somali Revival Council, UK; former advisor to Ministers of Labour, Youth and Sports
ENG. SAYID AHMED SH. DAHIR	Former Minister
OMAR SALAD ELMI	Former Governor and Member of Parliament
HON. ALI MOHAMED FAQAY	Minister of State for Fisheries and Marine Resources, Transitional Federal Government of Somalia
MR AHMED FARAH	Former Minister of Finance, Puntland, Lecturer (SIDAM) Training Institute, Camden Community Development Officer
MR ABDI AFRAH GURE	Secretary, Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations
MR MOHAMUD GUREH	Lecturer, Agro-economist, Community Leader
MR AWO SUFI HAJI	Businessman
DR ABDULLAHI HASSAN	Regional Health Superintendent; Member, Somali Welfare Association
ANAB HASSAN	Community leader and journalist
MR OMER A. HERSI	Former Somali Ambassador to Sweden
MR ADAN ABDI HUSSEIN	Former President of Somali Banana Board and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Planning
MR M IBAAR	Businessman
MR MOHAMED HASHI MOHAMUD-ALI	Former Professor of History and Sociology, Somali National University

ABDIRASHID M. IMAN	Executive Committee member, RAJO-Integration, Peace & Development for Somalia (Switzerland)
ABDULAZIZ ALI IBRAHIM	Peace activist
YUSUF AHMED MAYOW	Former Director of Department, Somali Central Bank
SAID BAKAR MUKTAR MOHAMMED	Former Chairman, Somali Independent Journalists Union
ABDULKADIR SHEKHEY MOHAMED	Businessman and diplomat
HASSAN MOHAMUD	Teacher and peace activist in Galkayo, Somalia
HUSSEIN SALEH MUSSE	Deputy Prime Minister, TNG (2003-05)
MR MOHAMOUD AHMED NUR	Businessman and Director of voluntary organisation
MRS MARIAM NUR	Community leader
MOHAMED ABUKAR-HAJI OMAR	Agronomist; Former Director of Somali Fruit Enterprise, Member of Parliament, Businessman; Deputy Chair, UK Somali Benadir Council
ENG. ABDIRAHMAN OMER OSMAN	Deputy Area Manager, Ealing Borough Housing Team Manager; Chair of SCG; High School Governor; Volunteer
RASHID SABRIE	Director of 'Open Channel' Somali language TV station, Stockholm
MR QASALI FAQAY SHEIKH	Director Department of Administration, Somali Coastal Development,
MR MOHAMED HAMUD SHEIKH	Associate Researcher, Somali Academy of Science & Arts
MR HAKIM WAIS	Managing Director, Transport and Logistics Training, Sheffield

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Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy will apply to be registered as a charity in the UK early in 2006. Funding is being actively sought for its future development.

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