ISSUE NO.4

satg

WISHING YOU PEACE AND PROSPERITY IN THE NEW YEAR

JANUARY 2012

PEACE THROUGH RECONSTRUCTION: INVESTIGATION OF THE POTENTIAL FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN DELIVERING PEACE

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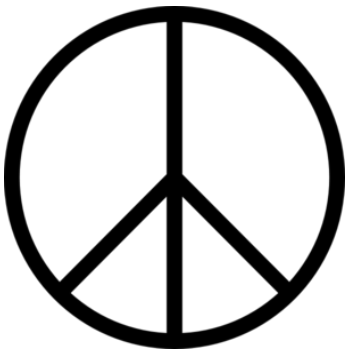
Currently the international community strictly adheres to what is called the 'Peace through Security' approach for conflict-stricken Somalia. However, academic and policymaker support is growing for an alternative approach, called 'Peace through Reconstruction' which emphasizes the rehabilitation of services, institutions and, most importantly, livelihoods, as essential for both the reintegration of former combatants into society and the amelioration of existing societal grievances.

The Peace through Reconstruction approach, particularly with a focus on agricultural development, seems suited for the Somali context for several reasons. Pre-war figures indicate that at least 67% of Somalia's GDP came from agriculture, livestock, and fisheries. With the collapse of the state and the onset of extreme urban insecurity, agricultural activities are only likely to have increased in importance within the Somali economy. However, as noted by the Food Security and Nutrition Assessment Unit (FSNAU) "agricultural production has declined sharply from pre-war levels, due to deteriorating canal and flood control systems, drought mitigation, lack of agricultural inputs and poor security." As agricultural activity, which is the mainstay of the vast majority of Somali livelihoods, decreases in value, options like militia membership, piracy and other conflict-promoting activities become more attractive alternatives as the opportunity cost of engaging in economic sector development drops.

Correspondingly, if agricultural production can be increased, for example through the provision of inputs, technology and training, this would raise the opportunity cost of conflict activities, providing incentives for a shift back to farming as well as for diversification into other economic sectors linked to agriculture, beginning with input and output services (seeds, fertilizer, transport services) and continuing into service sectors like finance and post-harvest services. The increased profitability of farming and trade would result in a shift away from conflict activities. Such a shift would decrease support for militias and warring factions, and increase popular pressure for peace, perfectly exemplifying the Peace through Reconstruction approach. Further, while the implementation of some development operations in Somalia's stateless situation can be difficult, technical assistance for agricultural development can be provided at the local level and in a devolved manner. It therefore need not rely on the state mechanism to function.



Both humanitarian and international security interests would benefit from an exploratory investigation of the potential of the Peace through Reconstruction approach for Somalia.

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PEACE THROUGH RECONSTRUCTION: INVESTIGATION OF THE POTENTIAL FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN DELIVERING PEACE

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However, a detailed understanding of economic sector development such as agriculture, livestock and fisheries is needed for such an investigation to be successful. The necessary experience and expertise will be provided by the Somali Agriculture Technical Group (SATG), which is a registered non-profit association of Somali professionals and friends of the country dedicated to assisting in the reconstruction of Somalia and its agricultural heritage. SATG, which collaborates closely with other sources of technical expertise, especially the Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research (CGIAR) Centres, was established to provide sustainable home-grown solutions to alleviate the rampant food shortages caused by conflict and the lack of effective agriculture and food policies.

SATG draws upon a mix of both practical and scientific expertise and is therefore an ideal organization to spearhead an investigation of the potential of peace through agricultural development in Somalia. ■

home-grown solutions to alleviate the rampant food shortages

DAI PARTNERSHIP WITH SATG ON ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SOMALILAND

After several months of discussion on economic resource enhancement in Somaliland, the Somali Agriculture Technical Group (SATG) has finally signed a one year partnership contract with Development Alternative Inc. (DAI) for agriculture-related economic growth and value chain development in Somaliland.

The USAID-funded Partnership for Economic Growth is being implemented by DAI. The purpose of the Partnership is to help local authorities and private sector groups improve the enabling environment for investment, generate more productive employment and improve other livelihood activities. The program anticipates expanding to other regions of Somalia. The Partnership has two focus areas: 1- overall private sector development, including women's business development; and 2- strengthening specific value chains, including livestock and agricultural production.

In the agriculture sector, DAI is partnering with SATG and Amoud University and the aim is to increase vegetable productivity and production volumes to replace imports and increase domestic incomes and employment. The role of SATG is to provide technical support to Amoud University in various agricultural activities including: a) identification of various vegetable crops and varieties b) developing protocols for introducing demonstration plots on major vegetable crops grown in the region, c) training of trainers and extension workers on crop production practices and d) providing training

SAGT staff from different regions visiting Amoud University

and technical know-how on seed multiplication systems.

Since its establishment in 2002, SATG has been advocating for long term sustainable agriculture programs. After the collapse of the Somali state in 1990, it has become a common practice to introduce and disseminate new seed technologies without prior knowledge and without testing for environmental suitability. This can sometimes become a very costly operation for the small-scale subsistence farmers when these technologies fail due to lack of adaptation.

In November 2010, SATG organized a workshop in Hargeisa on Technology Testing and Transfer with

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DAI PARTNERSHIP WITH SATG ON ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SOMALILAND

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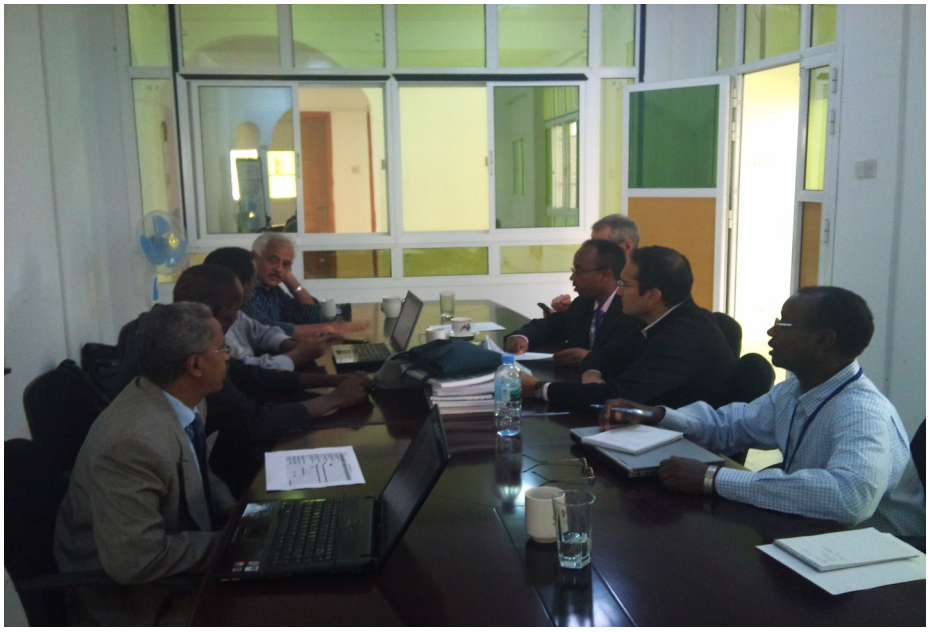
the aim of helping the field practitioners (local and international NGOs) to develop a comprehensive testing system for new technologies. During the workshop, the key functions critical to agricultural technology and development were identified as technology sourcing, testing and adaptation, technology dissemination, resource mobilization, coordination, awareness of and compliance with standards, market development, and training/capacity development.

The partnership between SATG and DAI is intended to address all the functions required for technology testing and dissemination and set the stage for economic sector development, specifically in the seed sector and agro dealer development. This will hopefully set the stage for others (international NGOs and donor agencies) to follow. ■

The aim is to increase vegetable productivity and production volumes



DIA meeting with SATG & Amoud University on Agricultural Economic Development in Hargeysa

AL-MADOW MOUNTAIN FOREST

Somalia is a home for a great number of endemic plant species which are unique to the local ecological conditions. Some of these species are not found anywhere else in the world. One of the distinctive areas for indigenous plant species is Al-Madow, a dense mountain forest in northern Somalia, extending from several kilometers west of Bossaso to northwest of Erigavo with an altitude of 700 to 800 m above sea level. It peaks at almost 2500 m in Shimbiris, northwest of Erigavo. The mean annual rainfall in Al-Madow is high, ranging from 750 to 850 mm in addition to winter rains, fog and mist. As a result of favorable climatic conditions, the area has richer flora and fauna than many other parts of Somalia, and harbors some of the rarest and most localized animal and plant species.

Studies conducted in 1995 by a team of botanists from Uppsala University in Sweden constitute the most extensive botanical survey ever done in the area. The study concluded that the area houses important germplasm which requires protection from overexploitation and destruction by humans. The team recommended that the local forest should be conserved as a

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2012

HAPPY NEW YEAR

About SATG:

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AL-MADOW MOUNTAIN FOREST

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national reserve, as it plays an important role in the mountain range's ecosystem and represents a valuable natural resource. In addition, the forest offers unique opportunities for education and research.

Among the various species in the area is a plant locally known as Sallama. It is one of the plant species used by the small-scale farmers in the area as a biological agent to protect their crops (mainly vegetables) against insects and diseases. In order to produce this agent, the plant leaves are collected and fermented for about two weeks. Then the solution is used as a spray against the pests. Farmers claim that this practice controls insect and disease damages but the level and the extent of the control has yet to be quantified. Further scientific study is required to verify this claim. Other species of economical important include Frankincense and Myrrha which produce resins that are valuable and are marketed row or through the extraction of essential oils that are used for perfumes and have medicinal properties.

With the lack of proper government policies for plant utilization and conservation, the local plant species are threatened, as well as the livestock which depends on these plants. The numerous under-exploited plants indigenous to Al-Madow ensure that a proper study and assessment would yield benefits both to the region's human inhabitants and to agricultural and medical sciences in general. SATG in partnership with Horn Relief is planning to carry out the identification of plant species used in crop protection and in traditional medicinal practices.

Al-Madow Mountain Forest in Sanaag

Detailed exploratory and conservation studies of the Al-Madow mountain range are needed to ascertain the present status of these areas, and to provide guidelines for and highlight the benefits of sustainable agricultural practices in the face of scarce forest resources. ■