

CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY: BUILDING A PEACEFUL & RESILIENT FUTURE

3RD ANNUAL PEACE CONFERENCE (APC 2025)



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Puntland Development and Research Center (PDRC) successfully convened the Third Annual Peace Conference (APC 2025) from September 21-23, 2025, in Garowe, Puntland, under the theme "**Climate, Peace and Security – Towards a Peaceful and Resilient Future.**" Officially opened by H.E. Ilyas Osman Lugatoor, Vice President of Puntland State, the conference brought together over 250 participants from government institutions, international agencies (UN, IGAD, SSF, Embassy of Switzerland), federal member states, East African countries, traditional leaders, civil society, and climate-affected communities.

Over three days, APC 2025 integrated scientific research, policy dialogue, and lived community experiences through **14 research presentations, 6 panel discussions**, community storytelling sessions, and PDRCTalks. The conference was structured around three interconnected themes: (I) Climate-Peace-Security Nexus, (II) Traditional Mechanisms & Climate Adaptation, and (III) Sustainable Solutions Through Local Voices.

Findings

- **Climate Projections:** Somalia faces alarming trajectories including temperature increases of **+1.9°C within the next decade**, drought cycles accelerating from once every 20-30 years to **every 2-3 years**, and over **3.8 million internally displaced persons** driven by climate shocks and conflict. Major crops have experienced **up to 50% production declines**, while the livestock sector has declined from over **US\$530 million**.
- **Conflict-Climate Linkages:** Time-series analysis (1989-2023) confirmed that climate change and conflict jointly drive displacement in Somalia. Five primary drivers were identified: competition over scarce resources, historical clan grievances, political contestations, climate-induced migration, and access to weapons.
- **Traditional Knowledge Systems:** The conference documented Somalia's rich environmental governance heritage, including **36+ customary laws**, the **Five Pillars of Somali Arbitration** (The Tree, Community Oversight, The Case, Legal Experts, The Council), three levels of traditional leadership, and the **Dubigees water law** (500-600 years old). Indigenous adaptation practices include Bakaar (underground grain storage), Waro (rainwater harvesting), and Eeg (grazing reserves).
- **Transboundary Water Crisis:** With **90% of Somalia's river flow** originating in Ethiopia and **at least 39 Ethiopian dams** altering downstream flows, the absence of coordinated water-sharing agreements threatens food security and peace.

The conference identified persistent obstacles including fragmented legal frameworks, weak enforcement despite existing laws, donor-driven policies disconnected from local realities, federal-state tensions, weakened traditional authority, 75% youth unemployment, cash transfer dependency undermining productive livelihoods, and excessive regional taxation barriers.

Strategic Recommendations

- **Governance:** Integrate climate adaptation into national security strategies; strengthen coordination across national, state, local, and international levels; harmonize statutory, Sharia, and customary legal systems; establish climate coordination bodies for cross-sectoral management.
- **Community-Led Solutions:** Shift from top-down to bottom-up approaches with meaningful community participation; empower local partners with decision-making authority; integrate conflict sensitivity into all interventions; support women's leadership and youth inclusion; leverage existing peace committees.
- **Resource Management:** Pursue bilateral water treaties with Ethiopia through IGAD; develop real-time hydrological monitoring systems; prioritize community-managed water storage; implement sustainable rangeland management; establish clear land laws.
- **Climate Finance & Technology:** Channel finance locally through accountable mechanisms; build strong business cases for investment; mobilize diaspora resources; scale climate-smart agriculture; integrate early warning systems with traditional knowledge.
- **Capacity Building:** Mainstream climate education; invest in vocational training for alternative livelihoods; support community-led schools; strengthen women's educational leadership; integrate intergenerational knowledge transfer.
- **Peace & Security:** Strengthen mediation through knowledge-sharing platforms; address root causes of conflict; provide psychosocial support for displaced youth; combat misinformation through positive storytelling; support hybrid traditional-modern conflict resolution.

II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful convening of the Third Annual Peace Conference (APC 2025) was made possible through the extraordinary dedication, leadership, and collaborative spirit of numerous individuals and institutions whose contributions deserve special recognition.

We extend our deepest gratitude to **Mr. Ali Farah Ali, Executive Director of PDRC**, whose unwavering commitment to this conference exemplified true leadership. Despite being hospitalized throughout the entire conference period, his thoughts remained with the organization and the success of APC 2025. His complete trust and delegation to the entire PDRC team not only enabled the conference to proceed seamlessly but demonstrated the strength of the institutional culture he has built—one rooted in empowerment, trust, and collective responsibility. His leadership from afar inspired the team to deliver their best work. May Allah bless him with his eternal paradise.

Special appreciation goes to **Hon. Arshe Mohamed Said, Puntland Special Representative for Trade and Economic Development**, whose support transcended his official government role. As a close friend of PDRC, he provided invaluable assistance with guest coordination, conference logistics, and the development of the official communiqué. His dual commitment—as both a government representative and a dedicated partner—exemplifies the collaborative spirit necessary for this type of work.

We are profoundly grateful to **Mr. Najib Ahmed Ali**, who served as the technical backbone of APC 2025. His meticulous work in developing the conference themes, structuring the agenda, coordinating participants, and ensuring technical excellence in every aspect of the conference was instrumental to its success. His expertise, attention to detail, and tireless efforts ensured that the conference achieved its ambitious objectives and maintained the highest standards of scholarly and policy discourse.

To all PDRC staff and friends—your dedication, professionalism, and unwavering support made APC 2025 a reality. From logistics coordination to participant engagement, from audiovisual support to documentation, each contribution was vital. Your collective commitment to PDRC's mission of promoting peace, resilience, and evidence-based policymaking continues to inspire meaningful change across Puntland and Somalia.

We also extend our sincere thanks to **H.E. Ilyas Osman Lugatoor, Vice President of Puntland State**, for officially opening the conference and affirming the government's commitment to climate resilience and peacebuilding. Our gratitude extends to all government ministries, particularly the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, and the Ministry of Interior, Federalism and Endogenous Development, for their active participation and partnership.

We acknowledge the generous support of our **international partners**, including the United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNTMIS), the Somalia Stability Fund (SSF), the Embassy of Switzerland, Dhabshiil Bank and Amal Bank and all donor organizations whose financial and technical support made this conference possible.

Finally, we thank **all conference participants** researchers, policymakers, traditional leaders, community representatives, women and youth activists, and climate-affected individuals—who traveled from across Somalia, the Horn of Africa, and beyond to share their knowledge, experiences, and visions for a peaceful and climate-resilient future. Your voices, insights, and commitments are the foundation upon which sustainable solutions will be built.

This conference stands as a testament to what can be achieved through collective effort, trust, and shared commitment to Somalia's future.

III. INTRODUCTION

The Puntland Development and Research Center (PDRC) successfully hosted the Third Annual Peace Conference (APC 2025) from September 21st to 23rd, 2025, in Garowe, coinciding with the *International Day of Peace*. This year's conference was convened under the theme **“Climate, Peace and Security – Towards a Peaceful and Resilient Future”**, addressing the growing challenges at the intersections of environmental pressures, governance, and peace.

The conference was officially opened by H.E. Ilyas Osman Lugatoor, Vice President of Puntland State, who reaffirmed the government's commitment to promoting climate resilience and peacebuilding. The event brought together over 250 participants including government officials, community representatives from federal member states, participants from east African countries like Kenya and Ethiopia, international including the Embassy of Switzerland, UN, IGAD, SSF, and a number of other agencies, as well as researchers and academic experts, traditional and religious leaders, youth and women representatives, civil society activists, community peace structures, and climate-affected individuals from all regions of Puntland. This broad representation reflected the collaborative spirit of the conference and its vision for inclusive dialogue and collective action toward a peaceful and climate-resilient Somalia.

Over the three days, the conference served as a dynamic forum for dialogue, reflection, and collaboration. It featured around 14 research papers, 6 panel discussions, storytelling sessions, and an evening event, PDRCTalks, which together fostered the integration of research, lived experience, and artistic expression.

The official communiqué of the conference outlined key action points and agreements reached by all participants. It emphasized the urgent need to address rising climate-related risks to peace and security through coordinated governance, policy harmonization, and inclusive community participation. The communiqué calls for increased resource mobilization, strengthened environmental governance, and strengthening of the role of traditional leaders in peacebuilding efforts. It further recommends enhancing regional collaboration, promoting sustainable management of natural resources, and supporting programs that combine mediation, governance, and climate adaptation. Participants were committed to ongoing dialogue, advocacy, and the implementation of these resolutions to advance a peaceful and resilient Somalia.

Conference Objectives

The APC 2025 was designed to:

- **Deepen Understanding** of climate-peace-security linkages in fragile contexts.
- **Bridge Knowledge Gaps** between traditional governance and modern climate science.
- **Foster Multi-Sectoral Dialogue** among policymakers, researchers, and communities.
- **Generate Evidence-Based Recommendations** for climate adaptation and conflict prevention.
- **Strengthen Partnerships** across government, UN agencies, civil society, and research institutions.
- **Amplify Local Voices** through storytelling and community-led innovation.

Conference design and approach

The conference will serve as a forum to integrate and optimize innovative research findings, policy briefs, government policies, and hear from the local voices on the issues pertaining to climate actions, peace, and security through collaborative and shared learning. The goal is to promote evidence-based policymaking and sustainable program development to promote durable solutions towards integrating the climate resilience, peace and security development.

This will be achieved through several formats:

- Keynote addresses and plenary sessions from expert speakers and contributors,
- Roundtable and panel discussions of critical issues and selected themes,
- Paper and poster presentations focusing on the nexus between climate, peace and security,
- Exhibitions of arts, programs, and technologies,
- Breakout sessions and PDRC Talks event.

The conference was structured around three interconnected themes:

Theme I: Climate-Peace-Security Nexus: Understanding how climate variability drives conflict, displacement, and insecurity in Somalia's fragile context.

Theme II: Traditional Mechanisms & Climate Adaptation: Examining Somali customary law, indigenous knowledge, and historical resource management practices.

Theme III: Sustainable Solutions Through Local Voices: Showcasing locally-led adaptation, innovative approaches, and community success stories.

II. DETAILED PROGRAM BREAKDOWN

Opening Remarks

In the opening remarks, **PDRC Deputy Director, Mr. Abdinahir Mohamed Yusuf**, welcomed over 250 conference participants. He informed attendees that PDRC holds this annual conference between September 21-23, commemorating World Peace Day. This conference is the third that PDRC has organized in recent years. The 2025 Annual Peace Conference specifically focuses on the theme of "Climate, Peace and Security". Mr. Yusuf emphasized that PDRC has been engaged in community conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and support for good governance for 21 years, which has enabled the organization to establish a strong foundation for this theme. Following the Deputy Director's remarks, PDRC presented a short but impactful film documenting environmental change impacts in Puntland State's territory.

Mr. Faisal Roble, a member of the **PDRC Board of Directors (BOD)**, followed by thanking participants who responded to PDRC's invitation. He noted that the film just presented explains the essence of the conference theme and illustrates the effects of climate change. The film urges all stakeholders to act immediately to safeguard the Somali people, whose livelihoods depend heavily on the environment and its fluctuations. Mr. Faisal observed that traditional resilience approaches have become outdated and no longer apply due to changing environmental conditions and human lifestyles. He emphasized that PDRC, utilizing the collective 150 years of expertise and experience possessed by its Board members across different technical sectors, organized this conference to assess the urgency and threats of a pending climate change catastrophe.

Mr. Faisal further noted that 75% of Puntland's and Somalia's population is youth, the majority of whom remain unemployed, while an overall 85% of the population is vulnerable to hardships and the adverse effects of climate change. He stressed that Puntland is not deficient in its most valued natural resource water but lacks the means to adequately harness the millions of gallons of water that flow annually into the Indian Ocean and Red Sea. He argued that utilizing this water resource through infrastructure projects such as dam construction and water diversions would create jobs and income opportunities for Puntland's youth.

Ms. Sarah Kim greeted conference attendees, explaining that the **Somali Sustainability Fund (SSF)** works with government, international agencies, and local non-governmental organizations to support climate change initiatives. She acknowledged that the documentary clearly demonstrates the urgent need for immediate intervention and rapid response. She concluded her remarks by announcing that SSF pledges to support climate change interventions over the coming two years.

Mr. Evert Kets, Head of the Puntland Political Office (UNTMIS), welcomed conference participants and thanked PDRC for this initiative on climate change. He emphasized that climate change constitutes a global challenge requiring accelerated solutions and closer cooperation among all stakeholders, including the global business community. He expressed hope that the conference would produce fruitful results.

Hon. Mohamed Abdirahman Farole, Puntland Minister of Environment and Climate Change, thanked and welcomed PDRC and all conference participants. He stated that his ministry is directly responsible for addressing climate change, noting that three climate change projects are currently ongoing in Puntland. Furthermore, he informed attendees that the Puntland legislative body had recently passed laws on environmental protection and conservation. The Minister emphasized that climate change, peace, and security are intertwined, as each impacts the others. In conclusion, he called upon the international community and aid agencies to assist in the campaign against climate change, which exacerbates conflicts and instability.

Hon. Abdi Farah Juha, Puntland Minister of Interior, Federalism and Democratization, discussed the political complexities currently prevailing in Somalia. He acknowledged that 35 years have elapsed since the fall of the Somali Central Government and the collapse of the Somali State, yet the country continues to experience civil strife, armed clan conflicts, and the absence of a functioning central government. He noted that political confrontations between the Somali Federal Government (SFG) and Puntland State are deteriorating at alarming rates. He outlined three options currently open to Puntland: (1) secession from Somalia and declaration of independence; (2) continued confrontation with the SFG until one side defeats the other; or (3) advocacy for the adoption of a federal or confederal governance system for Somalia at large.

His Excellency the Vice-President of Puntland, Ilyas Osman Lugatoor, greeted the conference and acknowledged that PDRC is a vital institution dedicated to peacebuilding, security maintenance, and reconciliation. He lauded PDRC's achievements and urged the organization to maintain this momentum. The Vice-President then addressed political issues pertaining to Puntland and Somalia. First, he affirmed that the Puntland Government has eliminated two enemies of the people: Da'ish (ISIS) and Al-Shabaab. He congratulated the brave Puntland security forces who eradicated extremists hiding in the Al-Miskeed and Al-Madow mountainous ranges, adding that "the Puntland people also possess a sizable share of this victory."

He then delved into the political intricacies of Somalia's predicament, expressing his belief that the tragedy that has befallen the Somali people since independence in 1960 stems from the failure of both the Somali elite and political leadership to effectively govern the country. This failure became particularly evident following the collapse of the Somali State in 1990, culminating in poverty, displacement, and clan fighting that undermined public security and ushered in clan fiefdoms, anarchy, and disunity.

The Vice-President proceeded to discuss the ongoing conflict between Puntland and the Somali Federal Government (SFG), which has resulted in the SFG's obstruction of international aid destined for Puntland. He stated that Puntland is ready to reconcile with the SFG upon reaching agreement on existing critical issues, emphasizing that without mutual respect and shared decision-making, security and good governance cannot be realized in Somalia—and consequently, no one can effectively address the adverse effects of climate change.

Regarding community reconciliation, the Vice-President noted that the Puntland government considers it a priority and actively engages in mediation efforts. For example, the government recently convened, with assistance from international agencies, two separate reconciliation conferences in Galkayo city. One conference addressed conflict between two clans (Dir and Shikhal) fighting in the Tawfiq area near the eastern coast of Galkayo, while the other brought together two clans (Sa'ad and Lelkase) fighting in the Galdogob-Bandiradley areas west of Galkayo. He reported that in both cases, the government successfully de-escalated the conflicts. In the Galdogob-Bandiradley area, the two governments—Puntland and Galmudug—disengaged the fighting militias and stationed security forces from both governments in the conflict-affected locations.

Regarding climate change mitigation, the Vice-President emphasized that the Puntland government has formulated relevant legislation, including:

1. Abolishing charcoal production and making imported liquid gas tax-free to reduce costs for consumers;
2. Imposing a four-month annual ban on fishing activities to prevent depletion of marine resources;
3. Drafting a law to be presented to the legislature prohibiting the establishment of new settlements in rural areas without government authorization;
4. Creating and training a 100-member police forestry unit to ensure environmental conservation and implementation of climate change legislation.
5. At the conclusion of his speech, the Vice-President officially declared the conference open and expressed hope that it would produce tangible outcomes with clear recommendations and an actionable plan to address climate change.

THEME I: CLIMATE-PEACE-SECURITY NEXUS

KEYNOTE:

GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Speaker: Dr. Ali Abdullahi Warsame, Former Minister of Environment and Climate Change – Puntland

Key Messages

- Climate change is the defining challenge of our era, transcending borders, sectors, and generations
- Global temperatures continue rising, accompanied by extreme weather events and environmental degradation driven by pollution, deforestation, and unsustainable resource use
- Despite existing frameworks (UNFCCC, CBD, UNCCD), major gaps persist in financing, emissions reduction, and implementation, particularly affecting developing countries
- The Horn of Africa faces worsening droughts, irregular rainfall, floods, and resource conflicts
- Temperature increases of 2.5–3.5°C are projected for the region by 2100
- IGAD and the African Union are working toward climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, and disaster management
- Somalia ranks among the world's most climate-vulnerable nations, experiencing severe droughts, deforestation, and water scarcity
- Somalia's climate challenges are compounded by weak governance and limited adaptive capacity
- Somalia has joined global climate agreements and developed the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
- Priority sectors include agriculture, water resources, health systems, and infrastructure resilience.



Solution Approach:

Dr. Warsame concluded with a call for strengthening collective decision-making processes at all levels and enhancing regional cooperation and coordination mechanisms. He emphasized the need to increase investment in green technologies and renewable energy solutions while simultaneously building social and institutional resilience capacity. Critically, he stressed the importance of integrating climate adaptation strategies with peace, security, and sustainable development initiatives to create comprehensive and lasting solutions to the climate crisis.

PRESENTATION 1:

CLIMATE CHANGE, CONFLICT, AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN SOMALIA - A TIME SERIES ANALYSIS (1989-2023)

Speaker: Abdulkadir Ahmed Mohamed, Jamhuriya University

Abdulkadir highlighted that globally, over 71 million people are internally displaced (IDMC, 2023), with Sub-Saharan Africa hosting nearly half. In Somalia, more than 3.8 million people are displaced (IDMC, 2024), driven primarily by climate shocks and conflict. Descriptive analysis shows an average of 767,714 IDPs, with sharp fluctuations linked to conflict, rainfall variability (mean 282 mm), and a relatively stable temperature of 27°C.



Rainfall supports rural livelihoods and helps reduce displacement, while temperature extremes, sea-level rise, and strong winds create episodic shocks that heighten vulnerability. However, conflict remains the most consistent driver of displacement, amplifying the impacts of environmental stress. The study confirms that climate change and conflict jointly shape displacement dynamics in Somalia, where insecurity further undermines resilience. Using ARDL and NARDL models, it provides the first time-series analysis of these linkages in the country.

Key policy actions include investing in drought-resilient agriculture, establishing conflict-sensitive early warning systems, strengthening peacebuilding and resource governance, and developing climate-resilient infrastructure, supported by regional cooperation through IGAD and the AU.

Limitations include reliance on proxy IDP measures, lack of socio-economic controls, and a national-scale focus. Future research should examine displacement thresholds, adaptive capacity, and micro-level evidence to strengthen understanding and inform more targeted interventions.

COMMUNITY STORYTELLING SESSION 1:

"VOICES FROM COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY CLIMATE-CONFLICT DYNAMICS FROM PASTORALISTS, COSTAL AND IDPS OF PUNTLAND"



This storytelling session brought together community representatives from across Puntland to share firsthand experiences of climate change impacts on their livelihoods and settlements. The session featured Mohamed M. Warsame and Abdirizak Yussuf from the Nugal–Sool border area, Abdullahi Mire from Ufeyn, Ruun Mohamed Yussuf from Aulla District, Anab Yonis from Rako, Hidig Mohamed from Dangorayo, and Said Mohamed from Kulub/Gara'ad/Dhinawda.

Each storyteller shared personal experiences of climate-related challenges facing their communities. With support from PDR's audiovisual team, they presented short documentary films demonstrating the tangible impacts of climate change on their environments and ways of life. Following the presentations, conference participants engaged in a dialogue with the community representatives, inquiring about the root causes of these climate phenomena and seeking their recommendations for potential solutions.

Case Study: The Dhinawda Devastation

One particularly striking presentation documented the devastating impact of migrating sand dunes on the coastal village of Dhinawda, located between Gara'ad and Hobyo. The footage was deeply troubling, prompting several conference participants to question whether human activities had contributed to this environmental catastrophe.

The representatives from Dhinawda clarified that this was a naturally occurring phenomenon that had accumulated over an extended period. They explained that migrating sand dunes, driven by persistent winds, prolonged droughts, and widespread land degradation, had progressively engulfed the village. They further noted that Dhinawda's plight is not an isolated case similar environmental degradation is actively occurring in coastal areas of the Bari Region, including Hafun, Hurdiye, Gumbah, and Bargal.

Discussion and Recommendations

Following the presentation, conference participants acknowledged that addressing the Dhinawda case study exceeds the capacity of its local inhabitants. There was consensus that international financial support and technical assistance should be urgently sought to save the village and implement sustainable solutions to prevent similar devastation in other vulnerable coastal communities across the region.

PANEL DISCUSSION 1:

CLIMATE CHANGE, PEACE, AND SECURITY



Moderator: Mahad Wasuge, Somali Public Agenda (SPA)

Panelists: Samira Gaid, Prof. Hussein Eman, Dr. Ali Malaq, and Dr. Mohamed Sharif

This panel explored how environmental degradation is driving insecurity in Somalia and discussed pathways for stronger governance and sustainable solutions. The discussion examined the nexus between climate change, national security, and peacebuilding, emphasizing the need for coordinated institutional responses and community-led initiatives.

Panel Contributions

Dr. Ali Malaq: Institutional Frameworks and Climate Response

This panel explored how environmental degradation is driving insecurity in Somalia and discussed pathways for stronger governance and sustainable solutions. The discussion examined the nexus between climate change, national security, and peacebuilding, emphasizing the need for coordinated institutional responses and community-led initiatives.

Reflecting on Somalia's drought history, he noted that drought cycles historically occurred every 20–30 years but have become significantly more frequent. He stressed that climate change directly threatens livelihoods, warning that when livestock perish due to drought, it signals an

emergency that eventually escalates into a humanitarian disaster—"where the land dies, then the animals, and finally the people."

While acknowledging that institutions and laws exist, Dr. Malaq identified two major challenges: weak enforcement and poor coordination. He recommended strengthening coordination across four levels—national, state, local, and international support—to effectively respond to climate impacts.

Samira Gaid: Climate Change as a National Security Imperative

Samira Gaid addressed whether climate change should be considered a national security issue, emphasizing the strong link between climate impacts and security risks. As a security expert, she argued that climate change poses a significant security threat, as it leads to displacement, increases youth vulnerability to recruitment by extremist groups, and intensifies resource-based conflicts.

She noted that Somalia allocates most of its resources to security, particularly anti-terrorism efforts, while social and community-level issues such as clan conflicts are often neglected. Samira stressed the need for a unified national strategy that recognizes climate change as a pillar of national security.

She highlighted that Somalia's responses are predominantly reactive, only beginning after a crisis occurs, whereas the country requires long-term resilience planning. Her key recommendations included: **(1)** prioritizing climate change within national budgeting and resource allocations, **(2)** strengthening coordination among stakeholders, **(3)** integrating climate considerations into the national security strategy, and **(4)** promoting locally driven solutions.

Dr. Mohamed Sharif: Community Assets and Pastoral Livelihoods

Dr. Sharif emphasized that Somali communities' most valuable assets are their land and natural resources, which are increasingly threatened by expanding urbanization and widespread deforestation. Speaking from the perspective of Somalia's pastoral society, he stressed that Somalis depend on healthy rangelands where livestock can graze and thrive.

He argued that meaningful solutions require the full participation of grassroots communities, alongside federal and state governments, as well as village-level authorities. Each level should have clearly defined roles, and efforts must be coordinated and harmonized to protect land, resources, and pastoral livelihoods.

Prof. Hussein Eman: Leadership and Governance as Foundations

Prof. Eman discussed the links between stabilization, peacebuilding, and climate change. Reflecting on Somalia's 65 years as a state, he questioned why progress has remained limited. According to Prof. Eman, the core issue is leadership. Without addressing corruption and ensuring that national resources are managed and utilized strategically, Somalia will struggle to find solutions across all sectors, including climate resilience and security. He emphasized that effective leadership and accountable governance are the essential foundation for stabilization, peacebuilding, and climate action.

Participant Contributions:

Mohamed Dhabancad – Puntland Special Representative for Political Affairs and International Relations argued that the current crisis is not solely about climate change but is also human-made. He cited reports indicating that more than 4 million trees are cut down annually in Somalia, emphasizing that such extensive environmental destruction is driven by human actions. He stressed the need to improve public awareness, enforce existing environmental laws, and build a collective commitment to strengthening state institutions and governance.

Puntland Minister of Environment, Mohamed Faroole, highlighted that his ministry has prioritized developing a specialized, well-trained environmental protection force with offices in all districts across Puntland to strengthen environmental governance and enforcement. He noted that while climate change contributes to insecurity, one of the major challenges is that government security forces lack the training needed to prevent environmental crimes such as illegal deforestation and wildlife trafficking.

PRESENTATION 2:

EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND GOVERNMENT STABILITY ON INTERNAL CONFLICT

Presenter: Mohamed Okash, SIMAD University

Somalia faces a critical nexus between climate change, resource competition, and instability. Recurring climate shocks are intensifying competition over land and water resources, driving conflict, displacement, and weakening community resilience across the country. The livestock sector, once a key economic pillar worth over US\$530 million, has experienced a dramatic decline due to persistent droughts, disease outbreaks, and trade bans.



Drawing on evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa, Okash explained that climate and environmental factors significantly shape conflict dynamics: increased rainfall tends to reduce unrest, while higher temperatures and deforestation heighten the likelihood of violence. Although government stability can mitigate short-term tensions, its long-term impact remains limited. He pointed out that while Somalia has promulgated a National Environmental Protection Law and introduced NDC 3.0 and a National Adaptation Plan (NAP), these frameworks remain fragmented, underfunded, and difficult to monitor.

He recommended integrating climate adaptation and peacebuilding into national security strategies, strengthening crisis response and market access, and promoting sustainable water management to reduce farmer–pastoralist clashes.

He further urged investment in climate-smart agriculture, diversification of exports, and expansion of climate financing and innovation, emphasizing the importance of combining traditional ecological knowledge with modern science. In conclusion, he underscored that Somalia’s climate–conflict nexus is an existential issue and addressing climate risks is vital not only for peace and resilience but also for the nation’s long-term trade competitiveness.

PRESENTATION 3:

CLIMATE CHANGE AS A TRIGGER FOR CONFLICT IN SOMALIA—FROM DROUGHT TO DISCORD

Presenter: Abdirahman Y. Abdi, Independent Researcher

Abdirahman Y. Abdi emphasized that climate change represents far more than an environmental challenge for Somalia—it has become a critical security threat that undermines stability, drives conflict, and threatens millions of lives across the Horn of Africa. This brief analysis explored the complex pathways through which climate change is fueling insecurity and instability in Somalia. Abdi called for comprehensive interventions to break the cycle



between climate stress and conflict. He emphasized the need for **stronger institutions** capable of coordinating climate response and conflict prevention efforts. **Transparent climate governance** mechanisms are essential to ensure equitable resource distribution and reduce tensions. Most importantly, he advocated for **community-led resilience** efforts that empower local populations to adapt to climate challenges while strengthening social cohesion and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

THEME II: BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

PRESENTATION 4:

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS IN PUNTLAND

Presenter: Liiban Jama, Departmental Director of Environment, Ministry of Energy and Climate Change (MOECC), Puntland

Presented an overview of climate change impacts in the region, highlighting how Puntland's geographic location, rising temperatures, shifting rainfall patterns, and manmade environmental degradation exacerbate climate risks. Droughts have become more frequent, occurring every two to three years, while surface water availability has declined, and groundwater levels in aquifers have dropped. These changes have negatively affected agriculture and pastoralism:

rangelands are shrinking, invasive tree species are spreading, grasses are disappearing, crop yields are declining, livestock production is decreasing due to erratic weather, and higher sea temperatures have reduced fish catches. Health impacts are also evident, with an increase in waterborne diseases, malnutrition, and stress among communities. To address these challenges, the director recommended integrating climate adaptation and peacebuilding into national security plans, implementing sustainable water management to reduce pastoral-farmer conflicts, and strengthening institutions and crisis response mechanisms.



PRESENTATION 5:

STATE-BUILDING FRAMEWORK AND CONFLICT DYNAMICS IN PUNTLAND

Presenter: Mohamed Ali Farah, Director General, Ministry of Interior, Federalism and Endogenous Development (MOIFED), Puntland

He highlighted ongoing constitutional reviews aimed at restoring security and addressing both external and internal conflicts. External challenges include territorial and political disputes with Somaliland and the Federal Government, boundary and clan conflicts with Galmudug, and the intensified threat of terrorism from Al-Shabaab and Daesh. Internally, conflicts are driven by resource disputes over pasture, water, and land, poverty and unemployment fueling militancy



weak state institutions, clannism, and cycles of clan rivalries and vengeance, including recurring clashes in Mudug. Specific disputes vary by locality, encompassing border, resource, and urban land issues. Additional challenges include recurring droughts that displace pastoralists, historic grievances that perpetuate blood feuds, and easy access to weapons by clan militias. Despite these challenges, Puntland has achieved progress through public forums and awareness campaigns across four districts to promote peace, as well as the establishment and training of peace committees in conflict resolution.

PANEL DISCUSSION 2:

CLIMATE CHANGE, PEACE, AND SECURITY—CURRENT REALITIES AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS



Moderator: Abdirahman Bihi, Somalia Stability Fund (SSF)

Panelists: Hassan Abdirisak Ahmed (UNDP), Sarah Kim (SSF), Lula Sharif (SSF), Jethro (DIIS), and Dr. Ali Ibrahim

Overview

This panel explored the nexus between climate, peace, and security in Somalia, examining current realities and future projections. The discussion addressed pressing challenges, the impact of environmental degradation, and pathways to promote sustainable practices through community-centered approaches and integrated policy frameworks.

Panel Contributions

Lula Sharif: From Top-Down to Bottom-Up Approaches

Lula Sharif emphasized that Somalia has suffered repeated climate shocks in recent years, with droughts severely affecting farmers, pastoralists, youth, and women. These climate impacts have escalated inter-clan conflicts and undermined national security as communities compete for increasingly scarce resources. She stressed that climate change is central to peace and stability, arguing that peacebuilding cannot succeed while climate-related conflicts persist.

Lula advocated for a critical policy shift from top-down to bottom-up approaches, insisting that communities and civil society must be meaningfully engaged for policies to be effective. On climate finance, she questioned what practical steps fragile states like Somalia can take, noting that the issue is not a lack of finance but rather the challenge of channeling it effectively to communities through local NGOs, CSOs, UN agencies, and government institutions.

Her key recommendations included: **(1)** directing resources locally to reduce implementation risks, **(2)** empowering local partners with decision-making authority, **(3)** integrating conflict sensitivity into all climate interventions, and **(4)** ensuring equitable access to natural resources such as water and pasture. Lula concluded by stressing that fragile countries require localized solutions supported by trust-building, equity, mediation approaches, and genuine power transfer to communities.

Sarah Kim: Holistic and Community-Driven Solutions

Sarah Kim highlighted that climate change disproportionately affects certain regions and countries, describing it as a global issue with accelerating warming and worsening vulnerabilities that threaten national security. She stressed that while technical expertise is essential, climate change affects every aspect of life—including health and livelihoods—and must not be treated as an isolated environmental issue but approached urgently and holistically.

Sarah advocated for localization through hybrid partnerships, integrated programming, and listening sessions to understand community structures and needs. She recommended collaboration with existing peace committees to leverage established local mechanisms. She emphasized that solutions should be scalable, high-impact, low-cost, community-driven, and informed by global lessons.

Sarah further stressed the need for deliberate planning that identifies high-risk areas, such as Puntland's coastal zones, and highlighted the importance of Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) systems to adapt strategies in an unprecedented and rapidly changing context.

Hassan Abdirisak Ahmed: Integrating Indigenous Knowledge and Accelerating Climate Finance

Hassan explained that climate change directly influences natural resource management, noting that activities such as charcoal production reduce rangeland capacity while livestock numbers remain high. This forces pastoral movements that serve as adaptation strategies but eventually lead to clashes over pasture and water resources. He emphasized that robust adaptation mechanisms must be developed to address these challenges.

Hassan stressed the importance of extending early-warning data from the state level to grassroots communities and ensuring that scientific information is translated into practical, community-relevant decisions. He argued that indigenous knowledge should be integrated into national systems and that community-generated data must feed into national programs and policies.

Regarding climate finance, Hassan observed that Somalia receives far less funding than it needs and that existing financing mechanisms are slow and cumbersome. He recommended building strong national business cases to attract investment in climate-adaptive sectors such as ports and agriculture. He encouraged mobilizing the diaspora and investing in interconnected projects that address multiple issues simultaneously. Hassan cited Puntland's experience developing District Adaptation Plans with MOIFAD and UNDP, urging their implementation through a holistic, multi-ministerial approach.

Dr. Ali Ibrahim: Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society Approaches

Dr. Ali thanked PDRC for organizing APC 2025 and emphasized that Somalia faces multiple climate-related frontlines, including accelerating rural-urban migration. He argued for integrated planning that brings together peace, security, governance, environment, and climate sectors, calling for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to climate resilience.

Dr. Ali stressed the need for coordinated planning among security, interior, environment, and climate ministries, and advocated for participatory early-warning mechanisms that build trust across communities and the diaspora. He promoted hybrid systems that combine scientific tools with indigenous knowledge, emphasizing greater transparency and close collaboration with communities.

Jethro: Strengthening Existing Systems Through Local Research

Jethro acknowledged the good quality of available data but noted the lack of deeper local studies and contextual reflections. He pointed out that much climate and conflict data had been circulated informally via WhatsApp rather than through structured research channels, highlighting a gap in systematic knowledge generation.

He stressed the need for locally grounded responses to local challenges, arguing that there is no need to reinvent entirely new systems but rather to strengthen existing approaches so that climate impacts do not escalate into conflict. Jethro recommended that implementation should begin in stable regions with functioning institutions to ensure successful piloting before scaling to more fragile areas.

Participant Contributions

Faisal Roble delivered a critical perspective, arguing that climate-related challenges intersect deeply with issues of foreign aid in African countries such as Somalia. He insisted that aid should not be treated as a handout and that Somali-led ideas must shape planning processes. While recognizing the country's limitations in creating new technologies, he stressed that Somalia can still develop robust adaptation mechanisms.

Faisal cautioned that funders often carry political motivations, making the attractiveness of proposals a dominant factor in funding decisions rather than actual community needs. He argued that Somalia should prioritize genuine adaptation strategies rather than fixating on securing financing.

Hussein raised a fundamental question, challenging whether the focus should be more on scientific analysis or community voices. He argued that a core failure in climate and peace interventions has been the systematic exclusion of communities from planning and decision-making processes. Hussein asserted that no strategy would work unless communities are meaningfully included, listened to, and empowered to influence interventions that directly affect their lives.

PRESENTATION 6:

CLIMATE CHANGE, FOOD SECURITY, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH NEXUS IN SOMALIA—A VAR ANALYSIS

Presenter: Abdulahi Nadif, JigJiga University

His study examined how climate variables (rainfall and temperature) and economic factors (GDP, investment, and population) influenced food security in Somalia between 1980 and 2022, using an ARDL bounds testing model. The results showed a stable long-run relationship among climate, economic conditions, and food security, with notable short-run impacts: increased rainfall improved food production, while higher temperatures reduced it due to heat stress, and investment contributed modestly to resilience. Over the long term, population growth emerged as the main driver of food demand, while rainfall, temperature, GDP, and investment were not statistically significant influencers. Overall, the findings indicate that food security in Somalia is shaped more by economic structures and demographic pressure than by climate alone. Nadif emphasized the need for climate-resilient agriculture, climate-smart practices, targeted economic policies, population planning, and stronger early-warning and data systems. He concluded that Somalia needs immediate climate protections alongside long-term reforms for food security.



COMMUNITY STORYTELLING SESSION 2:

VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINE - LIVED EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY CLIMATE-CONFLICT DYNAMICS



Participants: Community representatives from Jubbaland, Southwest State, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, and Garissa County (Kenya)

This storytelling session brought together voices from frontline communities directly impacted by the intersection of climate change and conflict across the Somali region. Representatives shared firsthand accounts of climate-induced displacement, resource-based conflicts, flooding disasters, and adaptation challenges, offering ground-level perspectives that complement technical presentations and policy discussions.

Regional Perspectives

Dr. Ahmed Maalin: Garissa County, Kenya

Dr. Ahmed Maalin from Garissa University, Kenya, confirmed that climate change is indeed occurring, raising the fundamental question of whether it is driven by human activities or natural processes. In Kenya, studies indicate dramatic environmental shifts: in the 1980s, 72% of the country was classified as dryland, whereas today that figure has increased to 81%.

Northwestern Kenya remains the most climatically challenging region, where rainfall patterns are highly unpredictable—sometimes causing devastating floods and at other times being extremely scarce. Poverty and climate-induced displacement further exacerbate vulnerability, as reflected in the Somali saying "**Soomaalidu Geela Afkiisa bay raacdaa**" (Somalis follow the mouth of the camel), illustrating the deep dependence on pastoralism.

Dr. Maalin noted that Somali communities often lack robust land use planning to safeguard their environment. Nonetheless, people are striving to adapt and build resilience. Many have turned to farming, though some return to pastoralism after initial success. Looking to the future, **agropastoralism** and **sustainable management of wildlife** for ecotourism could serve as important alternative pathways for community resilience.

Garissa County operates a county steering committee that monitors and responds to emerging challenges. Dr. Maalin emphasized that viable solutions include: **(1)** strengthening education and skills development, **(2)** supporting farming initiatives, and **(3)** transforming prevailing mindsets within Somali communities to embrace diversified livelihoods.

Abdulkadir Ali: Southwest State

Abdulkadir Ali from Southwest State explained that climate change has significant security implications for the region. Southwest State consists of three regions with distinct climate profiles: **Lower Shabelle** is a river-fed area with relatively stable water access, while Bay and **Bakool** depend entirely on seasonal rainfall, making them highly vulnerable to drought.

When rains fail, rural populations are forced to migrate to urban centers. Compounding this challenge, insecurity prevents humanitarian aid and essential supplies from reaching affected rural areas. As people move into towns, humanitarian agencies implement tracking systems, mobilize resources, and allocate land to newly displaced families to manage the influx.

Ubax Abdullahi: Galmudug State

Ubax Abdullahi from Galmudug State highlighted that the state experiences frequent conflict rooted in competition over land and grazing resources. Climate change exacerbates these tensions, as reduced rainfall triggers population movements that often lead to violent clashes between communities.

Recently, Galmudug has witnessed serious security incidents, including **kidnappings involving women and children** and other grave violations against civilians. Many disputes center on territorial claims such as "*this land belongs to our clan*" versus "*no, it belongs to us.*" Although numerous mediation efforts have been undertaken, the underlying causes of conflict persist.

Ubax emphasized that sustainable solutions require: **(1)** strengthening state authority through building capable security forces, **(2)** establishing clear land laws to reduce ambiguity and dispute, **(3)** promoting community awareness on shared ownership and peaceful coexistence, and **(4)** expanding access to education to create alternative livelihood opportunities and reduce dependence on contested natural resources.

Ali Faarah: Jubbaland State

Ali Faarah from Jubbaland State explained that recurrent droughts have caused massive displacement across the region. Many people have lost both farms and livestock and now live as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps. He shared his personal experience: **"I am now from Qaam-Qaam, a settlement located about 20 km from Kismayo where a lot of IDPs live."**

Some displaced families have been included in durable solution programs through which permanent houses are constructed. However, many still remain without proper shelter due to the continuous influx of newly displaced people caused by repeated droughts. Ali emphasized that the solution cannot be limited to simply resettling everyone as refugees.

Sustainable progress requires **coordinated actions among government institutions, humanitarian agencies, and communities**. He added that clan-related conflicts should be addressed through **traditional mechanisms** and kept separate from politics. In the long term, strategies are also needed to manage recurring floods, which compound the challenges faced by drought-affected communities.

Ahmed: Hirshabelle State

Ahmed from Hirshabelle State stated that the biggest challenge in Beledweyne and across Hirshabelle is **recurring flooding from the Shabelle River**. The first recorded major flood was in 1981, followed by another in 1997 (known as "**Dayrta Biyo Badan**" or the season of abundant water). Since then, floods have become increasingly frequent, sometimes occurring in consecutive seasons with devastating impacts on communities and livelihoods.

Current responses are mostly **emergency-based**. Some efforts have included constructing river embankments to protect communities, while some families have built alternative homes in nearby villages so they can relocate when floods occur. However, these measures are reactive rather than preventive.

Ahmed emphasized that a sustainable solution would be to **establish a national or state-level committee** to manage the impacts of climate change comprehensively. Such a body would address the needs of both pastoralists whose livestock are affected by drought and communities impacted by flooding, providing coordinated responses across different climate hazards.

Critical Questions and Discussion

1. Production Limitations and Cash Transfer Programs

Professor Hussein Eman raised important concerns about agricultural production management and the socio-economic impacts of relief programs. He asked: *How can production, especially of crops, be managed when imports are exceeding exports?*

He noted that people affected by drought are often not supported through sustainable livestock assistance but instead receive **cash payments** rather than productive support. The panelists underscored that although cash transfer programs are designed as emergency interventions, they create significant challenges for affected communities:

- Recipients often become **reliant on monthly cash payments** and are less motivated to resume productive activities such as farming or livestock rearing, since "people will survive" on the cash received
- Previously, Somalia's government contributed a **"country contribution,"** which ensured government involvement in project planning and implementation
- Today, however, the government makes almost no contribution, and donor funds are strictly **"lifesaving"** rather than contributing to longer-term development
- This **absence of government involvement** undermines sustainable solutions and perpetuates aid dependency

2. Excessive Taxation by Regional Authorities

Professor Hussein also raised the issue of **high taxes imposed by different regional administrations**, which make it difficult for farmers to supply goods across the country. These taxation barriers limit food availability and market efficiency, hindering the development of a functional national food system.

3. Transboundary Water Management and Ethiopian Dams

Saido Ahmed raised challenges related to river management, particularly the **impact of upstream dams in Ethiopia**. She noted that during the official opening of a new dam in Ethiopia, attended by Somalia's president, questions arose regarding potential downstream impacts on Somali communities.

The panel responded that smaller dams in Ethiopia often **release excess water during heavy rains** and **restrict flows during dry periods**, directly affecting downstream regions in Somalia. This situation illustrates how upstream dam operations can significantly influence water availability, flooding patterns, and agricultural productivity in Somalia.

The panelists emphasized the urgent need for **coordinated transboundary water management** through bilateral or multilateral agreements that ensure equitable water sharing and minimize harm to downstream communities.

Key Recommendations from Communities

- **Shift from Emergency Relief to Development:** Move beyond cash transfers and temporary solutions toward productive support, livelihood diversification, and long-term resilience building
- **Strengthen Government Involvement:** Restore government contribution to humanitarian and development programs to ensure sustainability and national ownership
- **Establish Climate Coordination Bodies:** Create national and state-level committees to manage climate impacts comprehensively across sectors
- **Address Resource Governance:** Implement clear land laws, strengthen state authority, and promote shared ownership principles to reduce resource-based conflicts

- **Invest in Education and Skills Development:** Expand access to education and vocational training to create alternative livelihood opportunities
- **Improve Transboundary Cooperation:** Work with Ethiopia and other upstream countries to build fair water-sharing and coordinate dam operations.
- **Reduce Internal Trade Barriers:** Address excessive taxation by regional authorities to enable efficient food distribution and market integration
- **Integrate Traditional and Modern Systems:** Combine traditional conflict resolution mechanisms with formal governance structures for more effective peacebuilding

Conclusion

This community storytelling session powerfully illustrated that climate change is not an abstract policy issue but a lived reality driving displacement, conflict, food insecurity, and social disruption across the Somali region. Community voices emphasized that sustainable solutions require moving beyond emergency responses toward long-term investments in governance, livelihood diversification, education, and coordinated climate adaptation. Most critically, communities stressed that solutions must be locally driven, culturally appropriate, and integrated across the climate-peace-development nexus.

PRESENTATION 7:

PUNTLAND AND GALMUDUG PEACE INITIATIVES—INTEGRATING CLIMATE ADAPTATION WITH CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Presenter: Daud Bishar, Centre for Peace and Democracy (CPD)

Project: Somalia Stability Fund III (SSF III)

Daud Bishar from CPD presented the Puntland and Galmudug Peace Initiatives project under SSF III, outlining efforts aimed at strengthening peace structures in both states, establishing community forums to promote social healing and trust-building, and creating coordinated, community-informed platforms that integrate conflict management with climate adaptation. The project supported mediation processes at multiple levels, including ministerial



engagement between the two states, targeted mediation with women and youth groups who played a crucial role in reconciliation, and the formation of clan mediation committees responsible for regulating grazing rights and addressing cattle-rustling disputes. Despite progress, the initiative faced persistent challenges such as historical clan grievances, power struggles, and the growing influence of misinformation and rumors, particularly on social media, which continued to threaten peacebuilding efforts. Key achievements included the facilitation of ceasefire agreements, deployment of neutral peacekeeping forces, and establishment of a 26-member inclusive reconciliation committee with balanced clan representation.

Recommendations he emphasized:

- Create awareness on the impacts of deforestation/charcoal burning that are the key drivers of climate change that affect water and pasture availability, hence causing a scramble for the little available, causing conflict on who grazes where in the communities.
- Continue to integrate youth and women empowerment programs into the projects - Invest in education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship to create economic opportunities and reduce reliance on conflict.
- Continue to integrate youth and women empowerment programs into the projects - Invest in education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship to create economic opportunities and reduce reliance on conflict.

Following Daud's presentation on the Mudug peace initiatives, the Mudug joint peace committees of elders, women and youth presented their role in peacebuilding of Mudug which have led to the successful dispersal of clan militias that had been in conflict. Women have played a pivotal role in these initiatives, actively advancing peace and fostering community cohesion. The session also emphasized the impact of storytelling and awareness-raising campaigns that have influenced local media practices. Through continuous engagement with journalists and community, the initiative helped shift media coverage away from negative or conflict-focused narratives toward more constructive stories that highlight cooperation, resilience, and peaceful problem-solving. This shift has contributed to reducing tensions and limiting the spread of harmful misinformation.

Additionally, an early warning system has been established to mitigate conflict risks. Through this mechanism, when rainfall occurs in specific areas, communities are notified in advance before they migrate, helping to prevent movements that could otherwise trigger clan clashes.

PRESENTATION 8:

BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CRISIS THROUGH EDUCATION

Presenter: Ms. Nimi Hoffmann, Sussex University, United Kingdom

Nimi Hoffmann's presentation examined how education systems in crisis settings can build resilience by adopting an ecological, community-centered approach to learning. Drawing on a four-year mixed-methods study in Puntland, Somalia, and Gambella, Ethiopia, the research focused on schools serving children displaced by conflict and climate shocks. The study covered IDP schools in Bossaso, Galkayo, and Garowe and engaged teachers, students, principals, and community members. Hoffmann emphasized the limits of generalization, stressing that the findings offer grounded insights into highly fluid and mobile contexts rather than universal models.



A central argument was that schools function as living systems shaped by relationships among learners, families, communities, and their environments. Community-led schools in Puntland demonstrated greater adaptability and social embeddedness than many INGO-led models. These schools were often rooted in adult literacy initiatives and evolved organically into spaces for children's education. Learning has been shown to extend beyond classrooms, flowing between generations and everyday life, with children applying skills at home and in markets, and parents reinforcing learning through literacy and engagement.

The presentation highlighted women's leadership as a key driver of resilience. In community-led schools, women were more visible as teachers and principals compared to INGO-led schools, where leadership remained overwhelmingly male. Female teachers were significantly more supportive of girls' education, suggesting stronger gender-sensitive outcomes in community settings. Hoffmann challenged external narratives that portray Somali women as marginal, arguing that standardized aid models sometimes contradict their own equality rhetoric and can unintentionally reproduce gender hierarchies. Finally, Hoffmann underscored the importance of intergenerational balance and language in sustaining resilient education systems. While most teachers were young, elders were largely absent from formal schooling, raising questions about how to reintegrate their knowledge and authority. The presentation also framed the Somali language as a bridge rather than a barrier, enabling inclusion, cultural continuity, and deeper learning. Overall, the findings called for education responses that respect local knowledge, strengthen community ownership, and align humanitarian support with existing social ecologies rather than overriding them.

PRESENTATION 9:

INDIGENOUS CLIMATE ADAPTATION PRACTICES IN SOMALI COMMUNITIES

Presenter: Quman Akli, ASAL

Quman Akli highlighted three key indigenous practices that have long supported Somali communities in adapting to climatic shocks. The **Bakaar** (underground grain storage) is traditionally used to preserve cereals such as sorghum and maize, protecting them from pests, floods, and droughts, thereby ensuring food availability during crises. The **Waro** (rainwater harvesting ponds) provide vital water sources for livestock, domestic use, and small-scale farming, enabling communities to survive dry spells. The **Eeg** (grazing reserves or pasture enclosures) helps safeguard pasture for use during droughts, sustaining livestock and supporting mobility. Quman emphasized that these systems can effectively complement modern resilience strategies through improvements such as hermetic storage, solar-powered water systems, and formalized rangeland management. She noted that integrating traditional mechanisms with modern tools like early warning systems and climate-smart agriculture enhances sustainability, cost-effectiveness, and community ownership, ultimately strengthening adaptive capacity and reducing reliance on external aid.



PRESENTATION 10:

CLIMATE CHANGE & CONFLICT IN JUBBA-LAND, SOMALIA

Presenter: Bara'a Jamal

Bara'a examined how climate variability influences insecurity in the region. While Jubbaland historically experiences minimal clan conflict, climate factors such as below-average rainfall, droughts, and flooding intensify existing grievances and increase competition over scarce resources. Reduced river water has led to tensions between farmers and well owners, demonstrating that climate change does not directly create conflict but amplifies underlying disputes. To address these risks, Bara'a recommended building the capacity of both traditional and formal leaders, developing and implementing early warning and disaster risk reduction systems linked to preparedness plans, and supporting livelihood diversification through climate-resilient training and financing. When asked about funding and early warning systems, he noted that while initial steps have been taken, the response to climate challenges is still in its early stages, with local government structures beginning to play a role in alerting communities and operationalizing these systems.



Critical Questions and Discussion

1. Account for Funding for climate challenges has been established; is it operational or working?

Response: The response to climate change in the country it's not full-fledged yet, as operations and initiatives are only now being launched. While early steps are underway, much work lies ahead to build comprehensive strategies and tangible action."

2. Is there an early warning system in place to alert the rural communities about climate-related hazards?"

Response: the system is in the beginning; we are in the process, but we included the system in the local government, who will alert their communities in the future.

PDRCTALKS 32: CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONFLICT - THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

KEYNOTE SPEECH:



Sultan Abdisalam Sultan Mohamud delivered a comprehensive keynote address on Somali customary law (xeer), exploring its general principles, institutional subdivisions, and historical application to climate and resource management. He emphasized that the knowledge he shared derives from oral traditions passed down by elders—stories rarely documented in written form but preserved through collective memory across generations. These narratives represent lived experiences among elders and leaders, spanning over two centuries of Somali legal practice.

Origins and Foundations of Somali Customary Law

Sultan Abdisalam outlined three essential foundations that establish xeer as a legitimate legal system:

1. Antiquity and Endurance

Somali customary law is ancient; like any recognized global legal system, it has endured through time, demonstrating resilience across centuries. Its longevity validates its legitimacy and effectiveness in governing social relations and resolving disputes.

2. Popular Consent and Practice

The law requires the consent and active practice of the people. It is not imposed from above but emerges from collective agreement and continuous application by communities. This participatory foundation ensures that xeer reflects community values and maintains legitimacy through popular acceptance.

3. Meaningful Arbitration

Somali customary law must provide meaningful arbitration that delivers justice and resolves disputes effectively. Without this substantive capacity, it would constitute mere tradition rather than law. The system's ability to adjudicate complex disputes and enforce decisions distinguishes it as a genuine legal framework.

Relationship with Other Legal Systems

Sultan Abdisalam explained that Somali law interacts with both international law and Islamic jurisprudence (Shari'a). This interaction creates a complex legal landscape where three systems coexist and, at times, complement or contradict each other.

He acknowledged that while *xeer* possesses strong elements worth defending—particularly its emphasis on reconciliation, collective responsibility, and restorative justice—it also has weaknesses that must be recognized. The system has evolved to address these limitations while preserving core principles.

The essence of Somali customary law lies in two fundamental principles:

1. Tradition (*dhaqan*): Inherited practices that carry intergenerational authority
2. Fairness (*xaqniimo*): Equitable treatment and just outcomes

Somalis articulate this through the saying: "Justice must be shared" (*xaqnimadu waa in la qaybsado*). This principle ensures that justice is not monopolized by powerful individuals but distributed equitably across society.

Xeer is considered heritage law, deeply respected by communities and regarded as binding. Sultan Abdisalam used a powerful metaphor: customary law is "like water that cannot be spilled" (*sida biyo aan daadan karin*), indicating its permanence, essential nature, and the impossibility of ignoring its authority once invoked.

The Five Pillars of Arbitration

Sultan Abdisalam detailed the five pillars (*rukummada shanta*) that structure Somali arbitration processes:

1. The Tree (*Geedka*)

The Tree serves as the site of judgment where elders gather to hear cases. This is both a physical space—traditionally under a large tree providing shade and communal gathering space—and a symbolic institution representing transparency, accessibility, and community witness to justice proceedings.

2. Community Oversight (*Kormeerta Bulshada*)

Disputes cannot be resolved without elders present. This pillar ensures that justice is never administered in isolation but always under collective scrutiny. Community oversight prevents arbitrary decisions and ensures accountability of those rendering judgment.

3. The Case (*Garta*)

Cases follow structured processes with 25 distinct stages (*marxalad*). This elaborate procedural framework ensures thorough examination of disputes, opportunities for evidence presentation, witness testimony, deliberation, and appeals. The complexity of the 25 stages demonstrates the sophistication of Somali legal procedure.

4. Legal Experts (*Xeer Beegti*)

Legal experts are specialists in customary law who possess deep knowledge of precedents, principles, and procedures. They serve as authoritative interpreters of *xeer*, guiding arbitration processes and ensuring consistency with established legal norms. Their expertise is cultivated through years of study and practice under senior legal authorities.

5. The Council (*Golaha*)

The Council has the authority to return cases for reconsideration (*dib u eegis*), functioning as an appellate mechanism. This ensures that decisions can be reviewed if procedural errors occurred, new evidence emerges, or initial judgments appear unjust. The Council provides checks and balances within the customary legal system.

Hierarchies of Traditional Leadership

Sultan Abdisalam explained that Somali society recognizes three levels of elders, each with distinct roles and responsibilities:

1. Senior Leaders (Salaadiin)

Salaadiin are the highest-ranking traditional authorities, responsible for major decisions affecting entire clans or regions. They provide strategic leadership, oversee complex disputes, and maintain relationships between major social groups. Their authority derives from lineage, demonstrated wisdom, and community recognition.

2. Peacekeepers (Nabadoon)

Nabadoon specialize in maintaining peace and preventing conflicts. They monitor community tensions, intervene early in disputes before escalation, facilitate dialogue between conflicting parties, and mobilize resources for reconciliation. Nabadoon serve as early warning systems and conflict prevention specialists within traditional governance.

3. Mediators (Samadoon)

Samadoon focus on active mediation of specific disputes. They facilitate negotiations, propose compromises, help parties reach mutually acceptable solutions, and ensure implementation of agreements. Samadoon possess particular skills in communication, persuasion, and creative problem-solving.

These three levels of leadership embody wisdom (xigmad) and balance (miisaan). The hierarchical structure ensures that disputes are addressed at appropriate levels, with mechanisms for escalation when necessary, while maintaining coherence in traditional governance.

Historical Climate and Resource Management

While Sultan Abdisalam's presentation primarily focused on legal structures, he connected customary law to historical climate and resource management practices. Somali xeer developed sophisticated mechanisms for:

- Regulating access to water through laws like Dubigees
- Managing grazing lands through seasonal rotation and protected enclosures
- Ensuring equitable distribution during droughts and famines
- Preventing resource conflicts through clear allocation rules
- Holding leaders accountable for resource stewardship

These legal mechanisms enabled Somali pastoral communities to adapt to climate variability for centuries, demonstrating that customary law is not merely a conflict resolution system but also an environmental governance framework.

Panel Contributions:

Aisha Geele opened by acknowledging distinguished guests and thanking PDRC for convening the dialogue. She reflected on Somalia's environmental trajectory, noting that during the country's earlier decades, climate change was not a significant concern. Floods and droughts were rare because local governance systems actively protected the environment. Land was enclosed for grazing, wildlife populations were abundant, and environmental laws were effectively enforced by traditional authorities.

However, following the collapse of the state in 1991, these protective mechanisms disintegrated. Grazing enclosures disappeared, conflicts escalated over unregulated resources, and rural communities migrated closer to urban centers. This breakdown led to widespread deforestation, overgrazing, and land degradation, fundamentally altering Somalia's environmental landscape. In response to this crisis, Somali scholars formed the Resource Management Somalia Network (RMS) in Buraan, Sanaag region. Led by Mama Fadumo Jibril, RMS established a rural institute

that trained youth from pastoral communities and engaged both rural and urban populations in environmental stewardship. The network monitored grazing practices, penalized poachers, and implemented land restoration initiatives that successfully revived productivity in degraded areas. Despite achieving notable success in environmental restoration and community mobilization, RMS gradually faded once formal governments re-emerged, as it was not recognized as a state institution and lacked integration into formal governance structures. This experience illustrates both the potential of community-led environmental governance and the challenges of sustaining such initiatives without institutional support.

Deputy Minister Abdirahman Khaliif addressed the complex relationship between resilience and conflict in Somali society. He observed that Somali children are raised to be resilient, a cultural strength that paradoxically can contribute to conflict when resilience manifests as unwillingness to compromise during disputes.

Khaliif identified four main factors driving contemporary conflicts in Puntland and Somalia more broadly:

1. Climate change and associated resource competition
2. Settlement of new villages leading to territorial disputes
3. Urban land disputes fueled by rapid urbanization and unclear property rights
4. Drug use, particularly khat and increasingly other substances, affecting social cohesion

He emphasized that each conflict requires context-specific resolution led by experienced mediators who understand local dynamics. The Ministry of Interior is developing a strategy to bring together individuals who have successfully resolved disputes, creating a knowledge-sharing platform to scale effective mediation practices.

In Puntland, political leaders frequently rely on traditional elders to mediate disputes. Khaliif stressed that elders hold public trust and can ensure laws are respected, making them vital pillars of stability. Their continued relevance demonstrates the enduring importance of traditional authority structures alongside modern governance institutions.

Engineer Faysal Rooble provided historical context for Somalia's governance challenges. He noted that Somalia has always faced three recurring challenges: droughts, conflicts, and displacement—phenomena dating back centuries rather than being recent developments. He argued that governance is the only sustainable solution to these enduring challenges.

Rooble emphasized Somalia's rich historical legacy, recalling that Somali territories historically interacted with ancient civilizations such as Egypt. During the 16th century, Ahmed Gurey (Imam Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi) governed vast territories, rivaling contemporary empires in administrative reach and military capability.

However, colonialism disrupted Somali state formation, simultaneously weakening traditional governance systems while failing to establish strong modern institutions. Colonial powers fragmented Somali territories and undermined indigenous authority structures without creating effective replacements.

Today, Somalia is caught between two incomplete systems: weakened traditional authority that lost institutional support and fragile state institutions that lack deep community roots. Rooble argued that the fundamental challenge is to harmonize both systems, reviving effective traditional mechanisms while strengthening modern governance capacity. This integration is essential for managing conflicts, responding to climate shocks, and ensuring long-term stability.

Sultan Abdisalam Sultan Mohamud delivered closing remarks that synthesized themes from throughout the conference. He emphasized that the collapse of Somalia's state in 1991 destroyed not only formal institutions but also social structures. Traditional elders, once central to governance and conflict resolution, lost influence and institutional standing in the chaos that followed.

While acknowledging that modern institutions are necessary, Sultan Abdisalam stressed that traditional elders and religious leaders remain indispensable in reducing social tensions and maintaining community cohesion. Their moral authority and deep knowledge of customary law cannot be easily replicated by formal state structures.

Sultan Abdisalam highlighted that Somali customary law has historically addressed resource scarcity, including droughts and famines, through sophisticated systems of equitable distribution and collective responsibility. He cited the Dubigees law, dating back 500–600 years, which governed access to water and community leadership. This ancient legal framework established:

- Hierarchies defining roles and responsibilities
- Accountability mechanisms ensuring leaders served community interests
- Sanctions against abuse of power, preventing exploitation

The Dubigees law exemplifies how Somali society has long possessed governance frameworks capable of managing crises. Sultan Abdisalam concluded that these traditions remain both relevant and necessary today, offering time-tested mechanisms for addressing contemporary challenges when integrated with modern governance structures.

Summary of Key arguments from the keynote speaker

Speakers highlighted the depth and sophistication of Somali customary law, its procedures, and its emphasis on fairness and collective responsibility. Sultan Abdisalam explained the origins of Somali law, the five pillars of arbitration, and the roles of elders in maintaining order. He described how customary systems historically managed resource scarcity, protected grazing lands, and regulated access to water. Other contributors explained how environmental governance weakened following state collapse, resulting in deforestation, overgrazing, and rural displacement. They argued that combining traditional authority with modern institutions offers a pathway to address climatic stress and prevent disputes.

Panel insights and audience engagement

Panelists noted that climate-related conflicts are increasing, particularly around land, settlement expansion, and resource competition. They stressed the importance of selecting mediators who understand local history, culture, and conflict patterns. Speakers highlighted the need to revive useful customary practices while strengthening state capacity. The session concluded that Somalia sits between two incomplete systems: weakened traditional frameworks and fragile modern institutions. Harmonizing both is essential for managing conflict, supporting resilience, and guiding communities through ongoing environmental pressures.

THEME III: SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS THROUGH LOCAL VOICES

KEYNOTE:

GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Speaker: Hon. Abdi Dahir Osman

Key Messages:

- Sound laws require consistent implementation and respected institutions
- Somalia's most visible environmental problem: **disorganized urban growth and poor planning**
- Chaotic settlement amplifies flood/drought impacts and strains infrastructure
- Core environmental drivers: overgrazing, deforestation (charcoal), unsustainable agriculture
- Coastal threats: unregulated fishing, illegal toxic waste dumping



Scientific Context:

- Explained causal chain: industrial emissions → atmospheric chemistry → acidification → ecosystem harm
- Economic development creates environmental costs during industrialization, but responsible governance can mitigate impacts

Barriers to Progress:

1. Institutional weakness
2. Low public awareness

Solution Approach: Simultaneous governance capacity-building and citizen behavior change

PRESENTATION 11:

YOUTH, PEACE, SECURITY, AND CLIMATE – RECOGNIZING YOUNG PEOPLE AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Presenter: Ingrid Perbo

Ingrid Perbo presented on Youth, Peace, Security and Climate, explaining the rationale for producing specific guidance on the intersection of youth, peace, security, and climate. She argued that policy, research, and programming in this field routinely overlook young people's perspectives and capacities. Popular narratives often portray youth as passive victims or security risks, whereas evidence



shows that only a small fraction of young people is involved in violent activity, while many are actively engaged in constructive climate and peace initiatives. She identified three structural causes of youth marginalization: lack of recognition, insufficient resources, and limited representation in decision-making forums.

She outlined why a youth-focused approach matters: countries most affected by climate change have proportionally youthful populations, meaning climate impacts disproportionately shape young people's life prospects. Young people face greater vulnerability because they are more likely to lose livelihoods, lack capital to adapt, and confront disrupted education and employment pathways. Despite these vulnerabilities, Perbo documented numerous examples of youth agency, including local climate-mitigation projects, adaptation practices, and peacebuilding activities in which youth lead public-awareness campaigns, resource-sharing initiatives, and community-resilience planning. She concluded that policies and programs must treat youth as active agents and experts by recognizing existing youth-led innovations, providing resources, and creating institutional pathways for meaningful participation and leadership.

PANEL DISCUSSION 3:

MANAGING WATER RESOURCES AND WATER SECURITY



Moderator: Liiban Jama, Ministry of Energy and Climate Change (MOECC), Puntland

Panelists: Abdelkarim Hassan, Abdinur Jama, Hussein Mohamed, Prof. Ahmed Abdi Baafo, Prof. Imaan

This panel addressed Somalia's critical water security challenges, focusing on transboundary governance, upstream infrastructure impacts, and pathways toward integrated water resources management. Each panelist offered unique perspectives rooted in their professional expertise.

Abdelkarim Hassan framed the water discussion by pointing to the transboundary nature of Somalia's river systems and the governance vacuum this creates. He reminded attendees that roughly 90 percent of Somalia's river flow originates in Ethiopia and described the recent hydrological shocks when rivers feeding Somalia experienced multi-year drying episodes in 2016 and 2017, triggering acute stress for farmers and pastoralists. Abdelkarim advocated for multi-scalar water management structures—district, regional, and national legal frameworks to distribute responsibility and create enforceable rules across levels of governance.

Ahmed Abdi Baafo focused on inter-regional cooperation and the agricultural dependency on seasonal rains and irrigation. He warned that continued upstream abstraction and dam-building in Ethiopia without coordinated agreements will precipitate agricultural collapse in the downstream Somali regions. Baafo proposed practical remedies: Somalia must pursue international water agreements, enter direct negotiations with upstream states, and invest in rehabilitation of riverbank storages and local water-harvesting infrastructure.

Hussein Mohamed stressed technical and ecosystem-based interventions that improve water security. He proposed riverbank stabilization, protecting riparian tree cover, renovating irrigation canals, and constructing sand dams and other community-level storage systems. Hussein emphasized that these investments require functioning government structures to coordinate funding, maintenance, and accountability.

Prof Imaan provided an inventory perspective, noting that Somalia historically had approximately ten dams, nine on the Shabelle River, and that Ethiopia has constructed dozens of water infrastructure projects, including at least 39 dams, according to contemporary estimates. This changing upstream infrastructure portfolio alters flow regimes and amplifies the urgency for diplomatic and technical responses.

Abdinur Jama explained the concept and necessity of integrated water resources management (IWRM) for Somalia. IWRM demands horizontal coordination among line ministries, civil society, and local water users, as well as vertical integration from local councils to national water agencies and international negotiators. He observed that Somalia lacks a unified negotiating position and has fragmented water strategies, with different plans at the federal and Puntland levels— weakening national bargaining power. Abdinur underscored the need for reliable hydrological data and routine monitoring as a precondition for treaty negotiation.

The panel debated conflict dynamics and management. Hussein and Abdelkarim argued for community inclusion and transparent resource allocation to prevent elite capture. Baafu contested simplistic conflict narratives, noting the absence of certain types of conflict over river water use historically, but all panelists agreed that without equitable governance and data-driven planning, tensions could escalate. Abdinur warned that federal treaty-making without adequate data or stakeholder consultation risks unintended consequences and weak enforcement.

The panel converged on seven priority actions:

- 1. Develop real-time hydrological monitoring systems** with automated river gauges, groundwater monitoring, and satellite remote sensing to provide evidence for negotiations and domestic planning
- 2. Consolidate a national water strategy** through federal-state dialogue, sectoral integration, and stakeholder consultation, creating a unified negotiating position
- 3. Pursue bilateral and regional water treaties** with Ethiopia, engaging IGAD facilitation and invoking international water law principles
- 4. Prioritize community-managed small-scale water storage** including sand dams, berkads, and underground cisterns with community ownership and technical support
- 5. Stabilize riverbanks and catchments through reforestation**, establishing protected riparian corridors and halting deforestation for charcoal production
- 6. Rehabilitate irrigation infrastructure**, surveying existing systems, improving efficiency, and modernizing diversion structures
- 7. Build institutional capacity for integrated water governance** at federal, state, and local levels through technical training, institutional development, and stakeholder engagement mechanisms

PANEL DISCUSSION 4:

LOCALLY LED CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES



Moderator: Abdimalik Ali Warsame, SIMAD University

Panelists: Ahmed Yusuf, Abdikadir Sheikh Mohamud, Ahmed Nur Yusuf, Roble Mohamud, Dr. Zaima, Dr. Sharif

Overview

This panel explored locally led climate adaptation strategies, examining the intersection of national policy frameworks, traditional environmental stewardship, climate finance mechanisms, technological innovation, and inclusive governance. Panelists emphasized the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge with modern approaches to build effective, community-owned climate resilience.

Ahmed Yusuf summarized Somalia's principal adaptation frameworks, including the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP). He explained that while the NDC provides national commitments under the Paris Agreement, aspects of NAP implementation have been localized to federal member states, such as Puntland, to deliver water access, food security interventions, land-use planning, blue-economy development, and climate-resilient infrastructure.

Abdikadir Sheikh Mohamud provided a contextual, historical view of customary environmental stewardship. He noted that traditional Somali communities historically practiced low-impact mitigation due to population dispersion and mobility, pastoralists could move herds to water and forage, and a rich body of customary rules exists to govern resource use. Abdikadir referenced a PDRC study documenting roughly 36 customary laws for pastoralists, fishers, and frankincense communities that regulated access, seasonal use, and conservation. He argued these customary regimes remain valuable but now require adaptation and resourcing to function under intensified climatic stress and demographic change.

Ahmed Nur Yusuf explained the fundamental mechanics of climate finance for Somali contexts. He described Somalia's access pathway to several international climate finance instruments and emphasized typical donor requirements: credible national planning, co-financing or community contribution, insurance mechanisms for livestock and assets, transparent financial management, and measurable indicators of impact. Ahmed Nur cautioned that climate funds must be channeled with robust accountability mechanisms and capacity for monitoring to avoid ineffectual or misdirected projects.

Roble Mohamud emphasized the role of technology in adaptation, particularly early warning systems that combine meteorological forecasting with rapid dissemination channels like SMS alerts and community radio. He argued that technological early warnings, when designed to integrate local knowledge and local languages, substantially increase pastoralists' and farmers' lead time to mitigate loss, move livestock, or secure water.

Dr Zaima and **Dr Sharif** focused on inclusive governance and gender dynamics. They called for programmatic structures that counter patriarchal exclusion by institutionalizing women’s and marginalized groups’ participation in climate planning and implementation. They urged mapping traditional adaptation practices alongside modern techniques to create blended, context-appropriate approaches. Collective recommendations included investing in climate-smart agriculture, supporting smallholder irrigation, preserving indigenous seed varieties while introducing resilient crop varieties, and scaling community insurance and cooperative finance models.

PRESENTATION 12:

RE-IMAGINING RECONCILIATORY GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK – SOMALIA'S CONFLICT AND PEACE NAVIGATOR

Presenter: Amjad Bhatti, UNDP

The presentation outlined how Somalia’s complex conflict landscape driven by clan rivalries, weak governance, political contestations, climate shocks, lack of data and resources dispute requires a structured, evidence-based approach to peacebuilding. To address this, UNDP introduced the Somalia Conflict and Peace Navigator, a decision support system (DSS) that strengthens reconciliator



The DSS is designed to support **inter-governmental**, **inter-sectoral** and **inter-agency** planning, programming, coordination and collaborative implementation. It functions as a diagnostic, descriptive, predictive, and prescriptive instrument, providing evidence-based insights to inform peacebuilding and stabilization efforts across Somalia.

The system built on mixed-methods, triangulated data, a modular structure and adaptive methodology. Pathway to Institutional integration is advanced through MOIFAR leadership collaboration with FMS line ministries, alignment with government frameworks and datasets, and partnership with UNCT and civil society. Overall, the frameworks emphasize that achieving a peaceful and stable Somalia requires understanding of conflict roots, fostering dialogue, building trust and advancing inclusive governance as the foundation for sustainable peace.

PANEL DISCUSSION 5:

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE



Moderator: Suuban Khalif

Panelists: Dr. Ismael Elmi, Dr. Mohamud Isse Trunji, Qasim Gabow, Sheikh Fuad

This panel examined Somalia's legal architecture for environmental governance, exploring the fragmentation across legal systems, historical enforcement failures, religious environmental ethics, and the disconnect between policy production and implementation. Panelists offered critical perspectives on why Somalia's environmental laws fail to translate into effective governance.

Dr. Ismael Elmi presented a jurisprudential analysis of Somalia’s legal architecture for environmental governance. He traced how the domestic legal order comprises three coexisting strata imported European-style statutory law, Islamic Sharia principles, and customary law systems and how the lack of harmonization among these sources has created legal fragmentation. Dr Ismael described the coexistence of formal courts and informal dispute-resolution mechanisms and argued that this parallelism has produced legal uncertainty, ambiguous sources of authority, and weak enforcement capacity. He concluded that current laws are poorly integrated with institutional capacity, leaving gaps between legal norms and implementable practice.

Dr. Mohamud Isse Trunji situated the legal failures historically. He argued that earlier state institutions in the 1960s and during certain later regimes once enforced environmental regulations more effectively, but the collapse of central governance removed institutional guardianship and enforcement capacity. The result, Dr Trunji asserted, is not the absence of laws but the collapse of enforcement and accountability mechanisms necessary to make laws meaningful.

Sheikh Fuad framed environmental stewardship through an Islamic ethical lens. He recited scriptural principles that present nature as a balanced creation entrusted to humanity, asserting that Islamic teachings call for protection of mountains, rivers, vegetation, and all living creatures. He used religious precepts to critique contemporary practices such as indiscriminate tree cutting and charcoal burning, linking these to the prevalence of droughts and increased flood risk.

Kassim Gabow argued that Somalia possesses a large body of environmental policies and strategic documents but lamented their instrumentalization for donor-driven workshops rather than effective, locally owned implementation. He observed that policy production has at times prioritized external funding cycles over local needs, creating “policy artifacts” that do not translate into governance outcomes on the ground. Qasim urged institutions to design laws grounded in local realities and to resist policy choices motivated primarily by donor priorities.

The panel reached consensus on major systemic problems:

- **Poor law initiation and design** disconnected from implementation realities
- **Fragmentation across legal systems** (statutory, Sharia, customary) without harmonization
- **Lack of implementation capacity** and institutional infrastructure
- **Weak rule of law** and collapsed enforcement mechanisms
- **Donor-driven policy practices** misaligned with local needs and priorities
- **Obscure or inaccessible legal instruments** that communities and officials cannot readily use

PRESENTATION 13:

PRIORITY CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE TECHNOLOGIES AND PRACTICES

Presenter: Dahir Yosuf Abdi, Livestock & Agriculture Research Institute (SoRLARI)

The presentation highlighted the priority climate adaptation and resilience technologies and practices being advanced by the Somali region Livestock & Agriculture Research Institute (SoRLARI) as part of broader efforts to build climate resilient futures in the Horn of Africa. Africa is identified as the region most at risk of climate change, due to its high dependence on natural resources and rainfed agriculture.



The Horn Africa has experienced four major droughts in the past 15 years between 2020 -2022 drought being the worst in 70 years. Ethiopia as home to 120 million people, is one of the world’s most drought-prone countries with hydro-meteorological hazards poverty and dependence on climate sensitive sectors contributing to its vulnerability.

Climate impact have led to widespread displacement, with nearly 20 million individuals affected by climatic shock in 2023. In Somali region, arid and semi-arid lowlands cover 60% of land and host over 15 million pastoral and agro-pastoral people. Recurrent droughts, floods, erratic rainfall and rising temperatures are threatening livelihoods, food security and human security which contributing to conflict and displacement. To address these challenges, Ethiopia and Somali region of Ethiopia are implementing key policy and strategy initiatives that prioritize self-sufficiency, climate resilience, recovery peacebuilding forest restoration, improved water resource availability and climate-smart agriculture.

The also presentation emphasizes that research is not just a tool but a lifeline and SoRLARI's mission is to transform vulnerability into resilience through science, innovations and inclusive action. Strategic priorities include scaling up successful practices, strengthening partnership because collective action is the only option and expanding climate smart research.

PANEL DISCUSSION 6:

WOMEN, YOUTH AND TRANSFORMING VULNERABILITIES INTO PILLARS OF CLIMATE RESILIENCE



Moderator: Hamdi Mohamed

Panelists: Ahmed Jama, Mohamed Muhiyadin, Abdullahi Ilyas, Jamila Said

This panel explored how climate change exacerbates vulnerabilities among women and youth while examining pathways to transform these groups into pillars of resilience. Panelists analyzed the climate-conflict-migration nexus, security implications of displacement, and practical strategies for building inclusive, sustainable adaptation through women's leadership and youth engagement.

Ahmed Jama presented a desk review linking climate variability to insecurity in fragile contexts. He explained how historical patterns of drought and flood alter livelihood systems, intensify competition for scarce resources, and interact with longstanding grievances to precipitate inter-clan conflicts. Ahmed identified four primary conflict drivers: competition over scarce resources, historical grievances, political grievances, and access to weapons. He highlighted positive case studies where women and youth in Galkacyo, Galkayo, engaged in peacebuilding and social integration activities, leading public-awareness campaigns, facilitating dialogue, and organizing joint livelihoods initiatives documented by PDRC.

Mohamud Muhiyadin focused on the security implications of climate-induced youth migration. He described how displacement exposes young people to recruitment by armed groups, escalates competition over resources in host communities, increases gendered vulnerabilities, including sexual exploitation and trafficking risks, and produces acute psychological trauma. Muhiyadin argued for combined traditional and modern resilience strategies: preserve indigenous seed varieties while adopting climate-smart agriculture, expand irrigation and water-harvesting technologies, and develop livelihoods programs that reduce migration pressures and mitigate insecurity by creating local economic opportunities.

Abdullahi Ilyas examined the rural-to-urban migration nexus and urban fragility. He emphasized that unplanned migration strains urban infrastructure, increases social crime risk,

and can give rise to new forms of fragility without deliberate rural investment. Abdullahi outlined practical interventions: design rural employment schemes, incorporate climate-change education into curricula, provide digital and vocational skills to youth, and create targeted job-creation programs to stem involuntary migration.

Jamila Said urged rigorous assessment to map vulnerability profiles, document best practices from traditional environmental stewardship, and systematize lessons for scaling. She stressed that any intervention must be evidence-based, gender-responsive, and attentive to local cultural dynamics.

Collective Recommendations

The panel collectively recommended:

1. **Strengthen women's leadership and youth inclusion in climate governance** at all levels —from community planning to national policymaking
2. **Invest in skills development and rural livelihoods** to reduce involuntary migration and create sustainable economic opportunities
3. **Mainstream climate education** across formal and informal education systems to build long-term adaptive capacity
4. **Establish psychosocial support for displaced youth** to address trauma and reduce vulnerability to exploitation and recruitment
5. **Design integrated programs** that address security, economic resilience, and social cohesion simultaneously rather than treating these as separate sectors



CONCLUSION

The Third Annual Peace Conference (APC 2025) has firmly established that climate change is not merely an environmental challenge but an existential security threat multiplying conflicts, displacing millions, and undermining Somalia's fragile governance structures. The conference's greatest achievement lies in demonstrating that **sustainable solutions already exist within Somali communities**—in centuries-old customary laws, indigenous adaptation practices, and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms—but these require urgent integration with modern governance structures, adequate resourcing, and genuine institutional support.

PATH FORWARD

Somalia stands at a critical juncture where climate shocks, recurring conflicts, and governance fragility intersect to create cascading crises. Yet the conference revealed remarkable community resilience, innovative adaptation strategies, and functioning traditional systems that, when properly supported, deliver tangible peace and climate outcomes. The Galkacyo peacebuilding success and community-led environmental restoration in Buraan demonstrate what becomes possible when local knowledge, women's leadership, youth engagement, and institutional support converge.

The conference's most urgent call is for **transformation from reactive emergency responses to proactive, integrated, locally owned resilience building**. This requires four fundamental shifts: (1) recognizing climate change as a core pillar of national security deserving commensurate resource allocation, (2) shifting power and resources from external actors to communities, traditional authorities, and local institutions, (3) harmonizing Somalia's fragmented legal systems while strengthening enforcement capacity, and (4) addressing transboundary water governance through regional diplomacy before agricultural collapse precipitates wider conflict.

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Achieving a peaceful and climate-resilient Somalia demands collective action across all levels. Government institutions must strengthen coordination, enforce environmental laws, and integrate climate considerations into all sectoral planning. International partners must channel finance through accountable local mechanisms, respect community ownership, and support long-term structural solutions rather than perpetuating aid dependency. Traditional leaders must adapt customary systems to contemporary challenges while preserving their wisdom and authority. Civil society organizations must continue amplifying community voices, documenting best practices, and holding all actors accountable. Most critically, communities themselves—particularly women and youth—must be empowered as primary decision-makers and implementers rather than passive beneficiaries.

COMMITMENT TO ACTION

The conference communiqué represents more than recommendations—it is a commitment to ongoing dialogue, advocacy, and implementation. PDRC, alongside government ministries, UN agencies, research institutions, and civil society partners, pledges to advance these resolutions through continued research, policy engagement, capacity building, and community mobilization.

The momentum generated over these three days must translate into coordinated national action plans, increased climate finance flows to communities, strengthened traditional-modern governance integration, and accelerated implementation of the National Adaptation Plan and District Adaptation Plans.

The choice before Somalia is clear: continue reactive emergency responses that perpetuate vulnerability or invest boldly in the integrated climate-peace-governance transformation that communities have articulated and begun implementing themselves. The knowledge exists. The traditional systems persist. The community commitment is evident. What remains is political will, adequate resources, and genuine partnership across all stakeholders to transform vulnerability into resilience and crisis into opportunity for a peaceful, sustainable future for all Somalis.



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