



## SOMALIA PRIORTIES AND LESSONS

# JOINT AGENDAS FOR CLIMATE & SECURITY

### Climate Change & (In)security Project

On Wednesday 19th July, the APPG for Climate & Security, chaired by Philip Dunne MP, hosted Khadija Al-Makhzoumi, Somalia Minister for Environment and Climate Change, and Dr Abdullahi Khalif, Senior Principal and Partnership Advisor, to discuss Somalia's climate and security priorities. The visit was supported by Scott Macdonald, Deputy Development Director, FCDO Somalia, and Catriona Clunas, Climate and Environment Advisor, FCDO Somalia.

The visit was welcomed by House of Commons representatives from a number of political parties, including Conservatives, SNP, Labour, and Liberal Democrat. The House of Lords was also represented. The Secretariat was represented by Louise Selisny (APPG Secretariat Coordinator), Dr Tim Clack (Director, Climate Change & (In)Security Project), and Faisa Loyaan (Senior Research Associate, Climate Change & (In)Security Project). Peers for the Planet was represented by Mark Engel, and the office of the chair of the International Development Committee was represented by Rebecca Lewis.

Minister Al-Makhzoumi welcomed the opportunity to speak to the APPG. The Minister and Dr Khalif shared insights on how the increased frequency and severity of floods and droughts was being compounded by the recent addition of cyclones to Somalia. It was noted that Somalia is a relatively 'data rich' nation, with baseline climate figures dating back to the 1960s. This data-set, in combination with modelling, has demonstrated the causal link between climate change and the increased displacement of people, particularly in the borderlands between Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. It was highlighted that last year close to 4 million people were displaced, and it is estimated that by the end of the decade almost half the population will be in need of humanitarian relief. Data were also presented to demonstrate that over the last 12 years, food insecurity has doubled in Somalia.

In reiterating the continued need of, and appreciation for, humanitarian support in light of increased climate change related shocks, the Minister Al-Makhzoumi also highlighted the need for development support that included technology and training, as well as financial investment. It was explained that, in the context of climate change, it was necessary to fix the causes, not the symptoms, of delayed development. In Somalia, this would include climate change adaptation across critical infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and transport systems. Somalia was noted to be the most urbanising county in Africa, with this transition further complicating adaptation efforts. Indeed, food systems in Somalia were noted to be struggling to accommodate rapid urbanisation as well as the reduced productivity of agro-pastoralist areas.



Minister Al-Makhzoumi highlighted the work of her new department over the last 12 months and asked how she could learn from the experiences of UK counterparts. Philip Dunne MP highlighted that, in the UK, the Environmental Audit Committee had recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. Moreover, he recognised that, as “climate change does not respect administrative boundaries”, it would be important to support Somalia, where possible.

Acknowledging the cross-departmental challenge of climate change impacts, Philip Dunne MP called attention to the issue of political actors with ‘titles of responsibility’ not always having access to the relevant levers to make necessary changes. He emphasised the importance of integrated approaches and ‘joined-up’ thinking as opposed to siloed functioning. Given the unprecedented character of the climate change challenge, actions have to be possible that cut across all parts of government. Philip Dunne MP also underscored the importance of supporting those in need, particularly in relation to food security.

Minister Al-Makhzoumi described how vital early warning systems are, reiterating that the cycle of drought and flooding conditions from previous years will likely continue into this year. The pattern of floods and droughts was set to further disrupt basics relating to food security, education, and economic prosperity. Livelihoods, and the chance for secure futures, were being undermined by climate change related shocks. Minister Al-Makhzoumi suggested that ways to forecast, predict, and build resilience were an essential part of Somalia’s adaptation strategy and planning. Faisa Loyaan raised the complicating issue of reduced recovery time in between climate shocks, as a consequence of increased frequency, and how this reduced overall resilience.

Chris Law MP asked to what extent, “climate change has been a recruiting sergeant for al-Shabaab.” The Minister pointed to direct causal links to increased al-Shabaab presence. She also explained how the climate crisis created complexities of governance and service provision that diverted resources from security planning and operations against al-Shabaab. In short, climate change impacts were at once increasing direct security threats and reducing the state’s ability to tackle them, thereby creating a vicious cycle of climate insecurity. Dr Tim Clack underscored the need for a resilient counter-terrorism strategy which necessitated enhancing Somalia’s capacity with increased integration across domestic military and police platforms, as well as international peer networks. Dr Clack proposed that robust climate change adaptations would reduce vulnerabilities and prospects for radicalisation and otherwise constrain al-Shabaab’s influence over local communities.

Dr Khalif described how climate change created grievances by threatening pastoral livelihoods and agricultural outputs and in creating water scarcity and driving mobility. The prospects of the infrastructural capacity of urban areas being overwhelmed was also recognised. Dr Khalif described how, “as they reach the agricultural land, the sand dunes now threaten communities” and “threaten the pastoral way of life”. He noted that land regeneration was increasingly important, as were efforts to support pastoral rangelands and provide sources of renewable energy for rural communities.

Minister Al-Makhzoumi highlighted the Great Green Wall Initiative, the AU’s pan-African flagship programme, which Somalia succeeded to in recent days. She also highlighted the ‘Regreening Somalia’ initiative of October 2022, which committed the country to the planting of 10 million trees to help combat the country’s drought cycles.

“as they reach the agricultural land, the sand dunes now threaten communities” and “threaten the pastoral way of life”

Minister Al-Makhzoumi thanked the UK Government for their programming and support of the people of Somalia.

In response to the event, Wera Hobhouse MP stated that, “the UK must prioritise strengthening its climate and security agenda. I am grateful for Minister Khadija Mohamed Al-Makhzoumi for sharing her valuable insights with us. It is imperative that we build robust global networks that allow us to collaborate in addressing the international threat of climate change.”

Philip Dunne MP brought the APPG meeting to a close with thanks for Minister Al-Makhzoumi and Dr Khalif. All parties expressed their desire to maintain continued dialogue and mutual support.

