



Executive Summary

Puntland Diaspora Forum 2nd Annual General Conference

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St. Paul / Minneapolis, MN USA

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<http://www.puntlanddiaspora.org>

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1.0 Preamble: Puntland Diaspora Forum (PDF)

Puntland Diaspora Forum is a grassroots organisation of which intent is to assemble Diaspora resources with operational local chapters cum zenith leadership. Founded in Garowe in August, 2008, the forum has currently eight chapters in North America and four chapters in Europe.

2.0 Vision

- a) Harness Puntland Diaspora resources,
- b) Build “Info” structure for resource sharing,
- c) Strengthen collectiveness and influence,
- d) Promote Puntland State,
- e) Promote and advance democracy and good governance,
- f) Collaboration amongst the Diaspora, Puntland government, and society,
- g) Advocate for the socio-economic development in Puntland State.

3.0 Puntland Diaspora Forum: Strategic Plan and Future Goals

- a) Support institution and capacity building in Puntland,
- b) Commence grassroots level engagement of Puntland Diaspora in creating operational local chapters in countries with sizable Puntland communities,
- c) Partake in the establishment of economic, social, educational, health, and developmental programmes in Puntland,
- d) A key goal is to play an advisory role, offer constructive criticism whilst advocating for the establishment of socio-economic development programmes in Puntland,
- e) Support and strengthen the democratization process in Puntland,
- f) Establish the Puntland Foundation for Education and Health.

4.0 Annual General Conference

Puntland Diaspora's annual general conference of which theme was "Reconstructing Somalia: the case of Puntland" was held in St. Paul / Minneapolis during the 9-11 of October. Hosted by its MN Chapter, the conference received Minister level delegation from Puntland State of Somalia, chapter delegates, dignitaries, U.S Senator, State Representative, UN officials, US State Department official, International and US non-governmental organizations, other local government authorities along with members of the general public.

5.0 Goals of the Annual General Conference

Situational analysis, critique of the status quo from economic, security, social and administrative perspectives confronting Somalia in general, and the Puntland State of Somalia in particular were the primary objects of the conference.

Also included in the objectives were:

- i) Analysis of the current political and security situation in Somalia whilst assessing the relationship between Puntland State and the transitional federal government of Somalia, particularly addressing the important issue of federalism,
- ii) Study and research initiatives focusing upon the formation of effective State institutions that take Puntland to a higher level of development
- iii) Encourage professionals, intellectuals, scholars and civil society actors of the Puntland Diaspora to actively participate in the reconstruction of Somalia, Puntland in particular,
- iv) Elect its new leadership, which shall guide forum policies, formulate its strategic, technical and operational policies for 2010 cum beyond.

6.0 Analysis

In its deliberations and through consultations, it was concluded that:

- Puntland undertook remarkable political reform in recent months, albeit has not entirely realised its fundamental strategic goals and policies; it is further noted that Puntland requires institution-based political framework of which its underpinning groundwork is based upon democratic and just system of governance,
- Traditional form of governance sways greater influence in the body politick than the institutionalised democratic governance,
- A stronger security apparatus and institutional security reform is required,
- Political and security challenges confronting Puntland are due to inadequate government institutions, therefore must be rehabilitated in consultation with professional technocrats, scholars, intellectuals, traditional elders, prominent religious figures, and the general public at large,
- In order to realise its goals and political agenda, Puntland requires tangible support in the areas of political reform, security, and socio-economic development,
- In all aspects, the role of Puntland Diaspora is rather negligible with an apparent need for their participation and support more so now than not, primarily in the areas of capacity building, knowledge and skill-set transfer, professional training, competency and proficiency,
- Whilst currently not manifested in real teams, Puntland Diaspora's active participation in the public discourse and political process in their respective host nations is a must,
- In many aspects, Puntland Diaspora lacks collaboration amongst, and correlation with, therefore remediatary measures must be effected.

7.0 Counsel: Puntland Diaspora & Puntland Government

Scholars, intellectuals, professionals and members of the civil society, who participated in Puntland Diaspora Forum's annual general conference presented valuable recommendations that which could serve as beneficial to Puntland, paving the way for collaborative relationship between Puntland Diaspora and Puntland government.

7.1 Puntland Diaspora:

Recommendations: Puntland Diaspora should:

- a) Create operational local chapters, that shall promote the interest of Somali community at large, Puntland in particular,
- b) Install proficient, capable, fair leadership that works for the interest of the community,
- c) Create synergy and coagulate resources, cerebral or otherwise in meeting the demands of their respective milieu and needs of the community whilst exploiting inherent societal strengths,
- d) Actively participate in public discourse and political dialogue engaging international organisations with concentration upon Somalia, Puntland in particular,
- e) Share gains in all occasions whilst carving up deficit at all times.

7.2 Puntland Government:

Recommendations: Puntland Government:

In its strategic vision, Puntland State endeavours towards the realisation of sustainable political and socio-economic development programmes whilst striving to the establishment of secure and safe social environment.

7.2.1 Political Opportunities

- a) State institutions deemed vulnerable in their current configuration must reflect the genuine yearning of the people of Puntland, that of the State, and its leadership,
- b) The people of Puntland State of Somalia must share gains in all occasions whilst carving up deficit at all times; equality, fairness and democratic institutions with which all citizens could identify must be instituted with the concentration being upon comprehensive reform of the security apparatus and political institutions. It is a social obligation upon all citizens, it be the general populace or government officials, to uphold the rule of law, conform to the security and political edifice,
- c) In order to instate sustainable political institutions, the initiation of the democratisation process, formation of independent electorate commission, and political party system must be expedited.

7.2.2 Security Challenges

- a) The government is the singular authority and the political body which implements State laws whilst enforcing the rule of law with the ownership of the sole authority and command, therefore a measured disarmament in line with the regional instability in Somalia must be implemented,
- b) Strengthen existing governmental security apparatus in maintaining the stability of the State, particularly rooting out sea piracy, general insecurity whilst obliterating elements susceptible to juvenile misconduct and addressing tribal discord,
- c) Rightly or not, piracy has become a marquee against the once serene image of Puntland State, an enclave of stability and progress, therefore a concerted effort annihilating piracy at all levels must be effected in consultation with regional and international actors,
- d) The issue of the Sool region of Puntland State of Somalia must be addressed soonest; Sool embodies the soul and the fibre of Puntland State, and that of Somali unity, therefore Puntland must implement a strategic policy towards Sool in consultation with traditional elders, civil society organisations whilst engaging the general public,
- e) Implement a security mechanism to root out human trafficking, disallowing migrants, Somalis or otherwise tragically drowning at the high seas at own peril.

7.2.3 Freedom of the Press

The right to freedom of speech denotes the right to speak without censorship and/or limitation with freedom of press speaking to independent media and printed material. Independent media, free of government intervention, serves as a watchdog that which seeks to inform the public, expose wrongdoings, and educate the public on important, relevant issues whilst observing own ethics, guidelines and generally accepted standards; adversely however, government control of the media in turn diminishes public discourse whilst suppressing public opinion and common dissent, therefore:

- a) Puntland requires independent and accountable media and published material,
- b) Regulatory body and statutory legislation defining the protection of the public media must be instituted,

- c) Censorship and intimidating practices must be abandoned, and security institutions along with legal agencies must observe the doctrine of freedom of speech,
- d) Only legal institutions must determine disciplinary rulings or punitive measures against any and all wrongdoings, and safeguard measures against abuse of authority must be instituted.

7.2.4 Transitional federal government of Somalia

In principle, Somalia embraced a federal system of governance, of which Puntland State is a part. It remains autonomous in its political, social, economic and security dealings, paving the way for future collaboration between the federal government and States.

Notwithstanding the initial goodwill and receptive stance by Puntland towards the ingenuous leadership of Somalia's TFG, which unfortunately withered away of late, it must be noted that the current leadership lacks the capacity, vision, political wisdom, and constantly violates agreed upon TFI institutions. It is a leadership which further disintegrates the already fragile state of the Somali body politic. And in that backdrop, as a stakeholder, Puntland must:

- a) As the only autonomous State, which recognises the legitimacy of the Traditional Federal Institutions, take an active leadership role in reconciliation efforts and the restoration of the Somali nation state whilst keenly participating in the political dialogue,
- b) Continue engaging and negotiating with the leadership of TFG accordingly,
- c) Work towards the realisation of the August Galkacyo accord between Puntland and the TFG,
- d) Establish collaborative relationship with MPs and ministers in the TFG who, equitably or not representing Puntland,
- e) All political discord between the leaderships of the TFG and Puntland must be handled with care, due diligence, and guided by political wisdom whilst keeping communications channels open,
- f) As a stakeholder, Puntland must negotiate for its fair share of economic development projects, financial and humanitarian aid and grants secured in the name of Somalia, which must be equally shared amongst stakeholders.

7.2.5 Social Welfare

State institutions should equally protect the rights of all citizens, the vulnerable and the able. It is commendable that the current administration had established an agency which advocates for the welfare of its citizens, therefore we encourage:

- a) The establishment of State-funded, poverty alleviation programmes with the creation of budgetary funds allocated for the welfare agencies and other social development organisations.

7.2.6 Environmental Protection

Environmental protection and safeguarding is a social responsibility on all citizens, therefore, Puntland must:

- a) Undertake research studies profiling ecological damages, outline political strategy advocating for the protection of the environment, against environmental degradation whilst promoting social awareness,
- b) Develop comprehensive strategy promoting rural/nomad lifestyle, survivability of the natural habitat and safeguarding of the indigenous wild life.

7.2.7 Human Rights

Human rights, which include civil and political rights, are fundamental rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. Such rights and freedoms are protected under the State constitution, therefore must not be infringed upon and/or violated.

7.2.8 Economic Development

It is commendable the Ministry of Finance is currently implementing a public finance strategy and a comprehensive tax reform programme which shall formulate State's economic development plan whilst contributing to its fiscal policy. It is however imperative that there shall have to be viable, comprehensive economic plan which guides State's future economic development plan. Further, creating sustainable socio-economic development strategy must be created.

7.2.9 Minority Rights

The rights of minority groups in Puntland should be protected and their civil liberties and political rights secured and safeguarded,

The Puntland state should strive to ensure that individual rights are not denied on the basis of membership in a minority group,

The Puntland state should allocate resources to rectify the legacy of discrimination and prejudice.

8. Decisions:

In the course of the deliberative process, it has been decided that Puntland Diaspora Forum:

- Annual general conference of 2010 shall be hosted in London, UK or Garowe, Puntland,
- Headquarters [HQ] shall be in Minnesota, MN,
- Acting Board of Directors shall comprise of founding members cum elected members from local chapters,
- Shall promote the establishment of operational local chapters,
- Shall advance Puntland Diaspora's participation in developmental and social projects in Puntland,
- Shall strengthen collaborative relationship between Puntland Diaspora Forum and Puntland government.

* A more detailed research dossier containing discussions, presentations and research papers presented at the Puntland Diaspora Forum 2nd annual general conference shall be published within 3 – 6 months of the conference.

** DVDs for the events of Puntland Diaspora Forum 2nd annual general conference shall be available by the end of October, 2009 at a nominal fee with all queries forwarded to the communications and public relations committee.

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