



Federal Government of Somalia  
Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development

# SOMALI WOMEN FORGING ALLIANCES TO SAFEGUARD EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL

OCTOBER 2020



## FOREWORD

Gender equality is both a key objective in its own right and a powerful force for development. For example, despite the many challenges that Somali women face, they serve as the main breadwinners for the majority of households, as this report confirms. Ensuring women are safe, healthy and educated is therefore key to protecting and promoting the welfare of households, communities and our entire society. Empowering women will empower Somalia.

However, progress is as challenging as it is important. Especially in fragile and conflict-affected settings, where many needs are vast and pressing, decision-makers often overlook the windows of opportunity these situations can present for advancing women's rights – and the transformative potential of seizing these openings early on. A lack of coordination between the many actors involved contributes to missed opportunities and can mean that our individual efforts add up to less than the sum of their parts. The coordination challenge is aggravated by a lack of institutional memory: In fast-changing environments marked by fragility and conflict, gender equality efforts often fail to build on past gains and lessons. A shortage of reliable data on the situation of women makes it difficult to create a common understanding of key problems and priorities – and therefore adds to the challenges involved in coordinating our efforts.

The privilege to serve as Minister of Women and Human Rights Development for almost four years has put me and my Ministry in a position to work to address many of these challenges in a serious way. From the outset, we recognized that Somalia is at a critical juncture in its journey to build an inclusive society that empowers and protects the rights of all, including women and girls. Our ongoing constitutional review, for example, provides a key window of opportunity to enshrine the rights of women in the foundations of our state. The forthcoming elections also offer a critical opening to further advance women's participation in politics. If these openings are not seized, existing achievements may be lost, including the 25 % representation of women in parliament obtained in our previous elections.

“Empowering women will empower Somalia.”

This is why, in March 2019, my Ministry led the development of the Somali Women's Convention. The event brought together more than 350 women and gender champions to develop a shared agenda for their rights in the constitution, the electoral process and beyond. They compiled their joint demands in the Somali Women's Charter. Amongst other steps, the Charter calls for women's full participation in public life, including through a 50 % quota and zero tolerance for gender-based violence. Since the adoption of the Charter, my Ministry has led a bottom-up, inclusive process to follow-up on the Somali Women's Charter. Through a consultative process coordinated by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MoWHRD), all Federal Member States (FMS) and Benadir Regional Administration (BRA) have developed their own action plans for implementation. The MoWHRD has also initiated the process to develop a national action plan for the implementation of the Charter. This plan will ensure all actors come together around a shared, inclusive and nationally-owned agenda for women's rights.

To raise further awareness of the Charter, collect an even wider range of views and concerns and, importantly, generate urgently-needed data to inform and monitor progress, my Ministry, has led a survey of more than 10 000 women across Somalia. The survey focused on giving voice to those most marginalized and empowering Somali women as survey participants, data collectors and administrators. In the spirit of the Charter itself, it was thus truly led by Somali women, for Somali women.

I am delighted to present this report, which provides an overview of the results of this survey. The findings will help provide an important baseline of data to monitor implementation of the Somali Women's Charter and progress made on gender equality and women's empowerment under our current National Development Plan (2020 – 2024). It is my hope that the results will also contribute to greater, shared understanding of key challenges and the immense urgency of meeting women's demands in the Somali Women's Charter. The survey both highlights the critical roles women play in maintaining households

and communities and the enormous burdens that prevent them from fulfilling their potential: While three quarters of the women who participated in this research serve as main or sole breadwinners for their families, only 12.9 % were in formal employment, the majority had not completed any formal education, one-fifth had been physically harmed by a person from their family in the last year and many felt unsafe both inside and outside of the home. Every step to address these and other challenges is an investment in gender equality and the future of entire households and communities.

The survey shows that women stand ready to play their part in this journey and help identify a way forward: The vast majority of women participating in this survey (92%) affirmed that they want an opportunity to participate in decision-making. They also noted (86.6%) that they would have more access to a decision-maker if that decision-maker was a woman. This shows that the 50 % quota called for by the Somali Women's Charter is both an important end in itself and a key ingredient for a society that responds effectively to the needs and concerns of all.

The young generation, women and men, give me energy to continue fighting for Somalia to become

this society – a society where they can realize their enormous potential. In my role as Minister, I have had the pleasure and the privilege to see the talent, commitment and courage of young Somalis working in the government, in civil society, in the private sector and in partner organizations. Many of them have played a role in realizing this survey, guiding it through the Ministry, facilitating the field research, collecting data or responding to the survey. I thank them and I want to encourage the young generation: Stay curious, ask questions, educate yourselves, speak your mind and persist in standing up for your rights and for those of others. This publication is dedicated to you. Finally, I would like to thank all of the friends and colleagues who have gone above and beyond to advance the common cause. You know who you are. Together, we will continue to show the power of principle. *La lotta continua.*



**DEQA YASIN**

Minister of Women and Human Rights Development  
Federal Republic of Somalia



Deqa Yasin Haji Yusuf, Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Federal Government of Somalia (left) with Sainab Abdi Moallim, First Lady of Somalia (second from left)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The staff of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development and Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development played a critical role in guiding and coordinating this work. We would specifically like to acknowledge the outstanding commitment and effort of Wilo Abdulle Osman, Senior Child Protection Adviser in the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, in coordinating this survey. Ridwan Osman played an important role in supporting the analysis. We would also like to thank Diana Koester for her valuable guidance and inputs in revising the draft report. The Federal Ministry worked hand in hand with Ministries of Gender and Planning at the level of the Federal Member States. Their active engagement is gratefully acknowledged. We would also like to recognize the staff of SOSTEC who supported the data collectors with any technical challenges experienced during data collection.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>MoPIED</b>	Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development
<b>MoWHRD</b>	Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MoWHRD) conducted a survey of 10 300 women in Benadir Regional Administration, South West, Jubbaland, Hirshabelle and Galmudug state, focusing on urban areas. The aims of the research were to (i) increase the voice and participation of diverse women, including marginalized women, in identifying and taking forward the next generation of development priorities; (ii) to help establish a baseline of data, which can inform solutions for gender equality and women's empowerment and build a system to monitor progress; and (iii) to enhance women's awareness of the National Development Plan and the Somali Women's Charter, a set of shared demands for women's rights developed by 350 women and gender champions from across Somalia and the diaspora in March 2019, during the Somali Women's Convention.

The results of this survey show that **women can and do play a critical role in sustaining Somali households, communities and society**. For example, **almost three quarters (74.2 %) of the 10 300 women who participated in this survey reported that they serve as main or sole breadwinners for their families**. With their income, the vast majority of the women participating in the survey provided for children and/or wider family, including elderly relatives, people living with disability and, in many cases, husbands. For these and other reasons, empowering women and girls is both a key objective in its own right and central for the advancement of Somali households and society.

However, **women face a large number of inter-related burdens that undermine their rights and constrain their capacity to contribute to sustainable development**. The results of the survey show, inter alia, that:

- **Despite their critical economic roles, only 12.9% of respondents reported being in formal employment.** This undermines women's empowerment and curtails their capacity to contribute to the advancement of households and economic recovery.
- **The majority of respondents in this survey (59 %) had not completed any formal education.** This undermines women's rights, contributes to their lack of opportunities in the formal sector, as well as poverty, infant and maternal mortality. More than half (52%) of respondents reported being unable to read. The majority of women started working and/or got married during the age bracket for school attendance, with two-thirds of the respondents (68.1%) indicating that they were married before the age of 18.
- **The women are seriously affected by drought and floods.** Almost half of the respondents reported that they had fled their homes because of either drought or flood (49.7%) and had lost livelihoods and livestock as a result of these disasters (48.9 %).
- **Many women feel unsafe both outside and inside of the home,** with a fifth of respondents (20.4%) reporting having been harmed physically by a person from their family in the last year. More than a quarter of the women (27.7 %) reported that they did not feel safe and secure when walking to or using the toilets.
- **Access to basic services poses a significant challenge:** 15.9% of women participating in the survey indicated not having access to toilets and only slightly more than half of the respondents (53.9%) reported having access to what they perceived to be clean drinking water, posing a serious risk for a range of diseases. However, **a third of respondents (32.3%) reported having no access to health facilities.**
- While addressing these and many other issues requires providing women with opportunities to share their experiences and concerns in decision-making fora, almost **two-thirds of respondents (61.4%) felt that they did not have opportunities to participate in decision-making.**

However, the survey results also point to opportunities and entry points for progress:

- **An overwhelming majority of respondents want more opportunities to participate in decision-making (92%) and indicated that they would have more access to a decision-maker if that person was a woman (86.6 %).** This points to the importance of promoting women's equal representation in decision-making positions - including through the 50 % quota demanded by the Somali Women's Charter - both as an end itself and as a means to develop public institutions that are accessible and responsive to all members of society.

- **The vast majority of survey respondents (90.1%) reported having access to a mobile phone, while a third (33.7%) reported owning a smart phone.** Most respondents (86%) reported that they use their phone for mobile-phone based money transfer services. This highlights the potential of reaching a wide range of women through mobile phones for a diversity of purposes, including awareness-raising, civic participation, economic empowerment and data collection.
- Despite gaps in formal educational attainment, **the vast majority of respondents (91.4%) attended Quranic School.** This confirms the wide accessibility of these institutions and their significance as a potential entry point for work on gender equality and women's empowerment.

On the basis of the survey results, the report identifies the following **recommendations to accelerate progress in gender equality, women's empowerment and sustainable development in Somalia:**

- 1. Take forward implementation of the Somali Women's Charter,** including by finalizing the development of – and ensuring sufficient resourcing for – Somalia's National Action Plan for the implementation of the Somali Women's Charter and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and mobilizing additional resources for the action plans for Charter implementation developed by the Federal Member States.
- 2. Ensure dedicated attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of NDP-9** and women's full participation in the identification of the next generation of development priorities, including by drawing on the results of this survey.
- 3. Accelerate support for women's equal participation in public life,** including by realizing the 50/50 quota called for in the Somali Women's Charter, and providing support for female candidates and representatives during and after the 2020/21 elections.
- 4. Invest in the education of women and girls** as another priority concern and identify opportunities to use the wide accessibility of Quranic schools as an entry point for work on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- 5. Remove barriers that prevent women's full participation in economic activities and the formal sector,** including by closing gender-based education gaps.
- 6. Strengthen access to basic services,** including equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and health services.
- 7. Accelerate efforts to address the distinct effects of droughts and floods** on women and support the active participation of women in the identification and implementation of solutions to climate change.
- 8. Build on the present survey to continue strengthening the quality and availability of gender-related data,** including by drawing on the relatively wide availability of mobile phones in urban areas.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Federal Government of Somalia recognizes that ‘Peace, stability and development can only be efficiently achieved by addressing the obstacles women face to fully contribute to their country’s development’ (NDP-8, pg 130). Similarly, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and follow-up resolutions acknowledge that advancing women’s empowerment in conflict-affected settings is both a key objective in its own right and a precondition for sustainable peace and development. This is also echoed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established in ‘Agenda 2030’. Agreed in 2015, the SDGs provide a set of global development objectives, which are to be achieved by 2030. Agenda 2030 includes gender equality and women’s empowerment as a central development goal in its own right (SDG 5) and calls for integrating a gender perspective in the implementation of all further development objectives.

The roadmap for the development of Somalia over the next five years (2020-2024) is provided by the National Development Plan (NDP-9), which reflects many priorities of Agenda 2030. NDP-9 identifies inclusive economic growth as the primary objective. Other pillars include security and the rule of law, inclusive and accountable politics, and improved social development. Gender, human rights and other social equity concerns are to be integrated as cross-cutting policies into each of these fields and a dedicated Pillar on Gender, Human Rights and Inclusion is being established to support this work.

The Somali Women’s Charter is the key document providing the shared concerns and priorities of Somali women and girls in the different areas of the NDP. The Charter is the outcome of the Somali Women’s Convention, which was held in Mogadishu on 04-06 March 2019, under the leadership of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development. The Convention brought together 350 women and gender champions from across Somalia and the diaspora to develop shared demands for women’s rights and participation in forthcoming elections, the constitutional review and the overall peacebuilding, statebuilding and development process in Somalia. Participants included representatives of local and national government, parliament, civil society, the private sector, the religious sphere, the internally displaced as well as people living with disability. The agenda for the Convention was developed by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development with a Steering Group composed of leaders who have made – and are making – critical contributions to the promotion of women’s rights and empowerment in government, parliament, civil society, the private sector and the media, ensuring full inclusivity. The First Lady of Somalia and Somalia’s Prime Minister opened and closed the event. The Convention also generated high levels of interest and discussion on social media.

Following three days of discussion, participants compiled their shared concerns in the Somali Women’s Charter. The Charter affirms that Somali women are “equal partners working for peace and political processes, leading us towards security, stability and sustainable development for all”. It includes a call for ‘equal participation in all political and peacebuilding processes’, including through a 50% quota for women. The Charter also calls for the protection of women’s rights and prevention of violence through ‘zero tolerance for gender-based violence’, strengthening of legal protections, women’s full participation in the justice sector as well as training on women’s rights for justice and security personnel. The Charter moreover demands for women’s specific needs to be addressed during relief and recovery by supporting women’s economic empowerment, socio-economic rights and full participation in decision-making on relief and recovery; by assessing and monitoring all development assistance through a gender lens; and by promoting women’s leadership and full participation in transitional justice. At the end of the Convention, Somalia’s Prime Minister expressed his commitment to make the Somali Women’s Charter a reality.

To identify solutions and measure progress against the demands of the Somali Women’s Charter and the commitments of the National Development Plan, further data on the status, challenges, opportunities and interests of women around the country is indispensable. In particular, there is a need to provide marginalized groups of women with opportunities to voice their experiences and concerns and participate in the identification of development priorities and interventions. In the spring of 2020, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development therefore collaborated with the Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development in leading a survey of 10 000 women [under the title ‘Somali Women Forging Alliances to Safeguard Equal Rights for All’] to increase women’s participation in development planning, help raise their awareness of key frameworks and establish a baseline of data against which to monitor the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment and to develop targeted solutions. The results are also designed to inform the development of a national action plan for the implementation of the Somali Women’s Charter.

**THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY WERE TO:**

- .....

**i.** Increase the voice and participation of diverse women, including marginalized women, in identifying and taking forward the next generation of development priorities.

.....
- ii.** Help establish a baseline of data, which can inform solutions for gender equality and women’s empowerment and build a system to monitor progress.

.....
- iii.** Enhance women’s awareness of the National Development Plan and the significance of the Somali Women’s Charter as a common platform to support a change agenda for all to strive for.

This overview report describes the research process and outlines the overall results of this survey effort. Future publications will be dedicated to expanding upon and analyzing in more detail the different thematic areas.

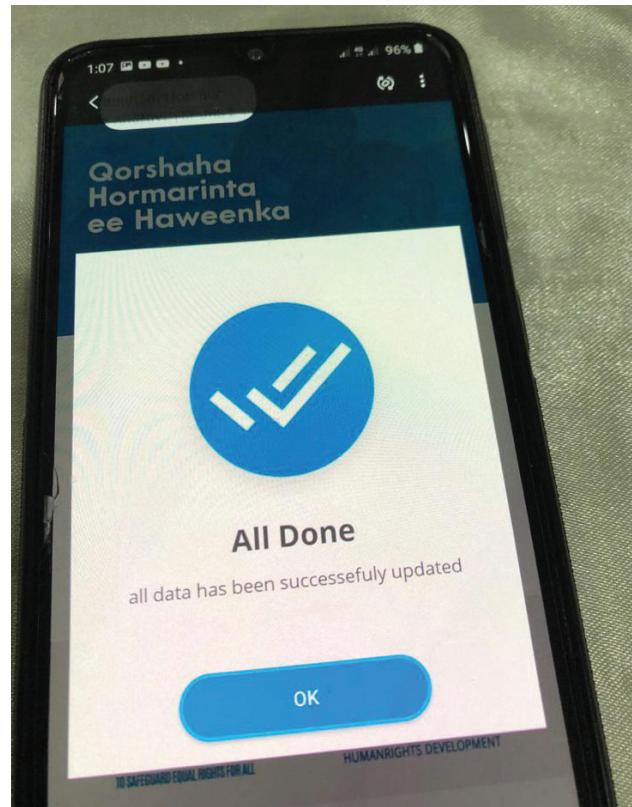
## 2. METHODOLOGY

The process of collecting primary data began in November 2019 and ended in April 2020. Data was collected from a total of 10,309 women and girls over the age of 15. The process involved five main steps described below.

### PART I: DEVELOPMENT OF SURVEY QUESTIONS AND APP.

The research team at the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development developed draft questions structured around the different pillars of the National Development Plan and the Somali Women's Charter, with support from UNDP. The questions were initially drafted in English and then translated into Somali. Before initiating the survey, the research team consulted with 35 people (both men and women) from different departments of the ministry on the survey questions, including the character of the questions, the language used and their setup in the survey App to be developed. During these consultations it emerged that changes were necessary to ensure the language of the questions would be understood by most Somalis, including people with different dialects, and the questions were rephrased accordingly.

A mobile applications developer company was contracted by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development to develop a survey App to administer these questions on barriers and opportunities for Somali women. The web-based App (initially) required data collectors to have internet connectivity to gather the data. The app was completed in mid-December 2019 and published on Google Play Store.



The survey app developed to administer the questions.

### PART II: INITIAL TRAINING AND PRE-TESTING

Initially, 10 staff (9 female and 1 male) from the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development were appointed as sample data collectors and trained on the final questions; how to capture responses in the app; and how to explain the background and rationale of the survey to participants ahead of the interview, which included introducing the NDP-9 goals and the outline of the Somali Women's Charter to the interviewees.

During the pre-testing phase, each of the sample data collectors was asked to interview 10 women from different areas and settings in Mogadishu, such as IDPs, women working in government institutions, civil society organizations, business women in the market and women on the street. Data was accordingly collected from 100 pre-test respondents.

On the basis of this pre-testing experience, the team calculated how many minutes one interview could take and how many interviews each data collector would be able to conduct per day. The team also identified a number of possible limitations that needed to be addressed. In particular, the app was only functional when connected to the internet but consistent internet connectivity posed a challenge. As a result, new features were introduced to the app to allow data collectors to work offline and synchronize the data once re-connected to the internet. In addition, a small number of questions were adjusted in line with feedback received during the pre-testing to ensure all elements of the survey would be easy to understand. Finally, based on pre-testing, the research team identified the need for further training for research assistants on how to use the app and how to approach interviewees.

### PART III: CONSULTATIONS AND TRAINING OF RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

In the next phase of the research, consultations and trainings were held to prepare the roll-out of the survey. In a first step, in December 2019, facilitators/trainers from the Federal Government of Somalia, Federal Member State Ministries, Benadir Regional Administration and civil society were trained in Mogadishu. These facilitators then organized and conducted a series of consultations: On 24th of March 2020, 50 women from different organizations and settings were invited to Mogadishu. During this consultative meeting, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development and the Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development presented the Somali Women's Charter and NDP-9; the background and rationale of the survey; as well as the app and how it worked. On this basis, the participants were asked to respond to the survey questions themselves, if they were willing, and to support the research process by advocating for the survey and providing support to the data collectors in their districts, networks, organizations, work places etc. The same day similar meetings were held with 50 women in each of the Federal Member States that participated in the survey.

From the participants of these workshops, 10 women were selected in each Federal Member State and Benadir Regional Administration to collect data for the survey. They included women from civil society, staff from FMS Ministries of gender, and different age groups. The research consciously selected data collectors who did not have significant experience in this field, so as to use the survey effort as an opportunity to build capacity among Somali women. The data collectors received repeated training on data collection as well as on technical aspects of the app. Building on the training, experience and skills received in this context, a considerable number of these women continued to work in data collection for FMS Ministries after the end of the survey, including in monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on women.



Training for data collectors.





Interview in a respondent's home.

## PART IV: DATA COLLECTION

Data was then collected in areas of the country that were accessible in light of the security context and budget constraints: Main cities in Benadir Regional Administration (Mogadishu), South West (Baidoa), Jubbaland (Kismayo), Hirshabelle (Beledweyn) and Galmudug state (Dhusamareb). In Galmudug, the research additionally covered several rural areas. In the first phase of the data collection process (24- 30 March 2020), the research focused on IDP camps in these areas. This was designed to reflect the focus of this survey on giving voice to the most marginalized groups of women in identifying – and informing the implementation of - the next generation of development priorities. In this context, in collaboration with partners working in the settlements, researchers went door to door to interview women. In all phases of the data collection, to conduct interviews safely in the context of rising COVID-19 concerns, data collectors took social distancing measures and avoided busy areas. In order to avoid possible security challenges, a snowball approach was adopted, where women who had agreed to participate in the interview recommended neighbours and other women who may be willing and able to participate as well. 5567 respondents were reached in this way.

In parallel, on 24th March 2020, the app was launched on social media (Facebook and twitter). While this was to serve as a principal way of reaching more privileged groups of Somali women who had access to the internet, social media only returned 111 responses. Therefore, in a second phase of the data collection (5-10 April), researchers collected data from formal settlements, going door-to-door and interviewing women in public spaces such as markets, shops and restaurants. Again, a snowball approach was adopted to mitigate possible security challenges. In line with the survey objective of giving voice to diverse women in the identification and implementation of development priorities, researchers were instructed to ensure women from diverse backgrounds are interviewed. The second phase of the research reached 4631 respondents. Table 1 below highlights the areas of the country where the research was conducted and the percentage of responses received from each of these areas. Hirshabelle could initially not be included in this second phase of data collection. However, since the completion of the analysis of this report, additional interviews were collected in Hirshabelle in line with the second phase of the research. These will be included in a follow-up publication providing an update on the figures contained in this report as well as further analysis.

Throughout the data collection process, to ensure data quality and integrity in the collection process, MoWHRD provided a team of leaders and field supervisors. SOSTEC Technologies was contracted to provide technical support to the teams in different regions.



TABLE 1: Areas where research was conducted and percentage of responses received.

Federal Member State (FMS) and percentage of responses	Area where the research was conducted (district or village)	Percentage of responses received from this area
<b>Southwest</b> (24.88 %)	Baidao	24.85 %
	Wanlaweyn	0.02 %
	Baraawe	0.01 %
<b>Jubbaland</b> (16.71 %)	Kismayo	16.71 %
<b>Hirshabelle</b> (10.44 %)	Beledweyn	10.44 %
<b>Galmudug</b> (21.34 %)	Dhuusamareeb	5.08 %
	Guricel	5.02 %
	Abudwak	5.01 %
	Adado	2.98 %
	Herale	1.10 %
	Bangele	0.50 %
	Hananburo	0.21 %
	Balanbal	0.83 %
	Huurshe	0.46 %
	El Dher	0.10 %
	Hobyoy	0.05 %
	Galkayo	0.01 %
	<b>Benadir Regional Administration</b> (26.63 %)	Abdiaziz
Bondhere		1.42 %
Dayniile		5.62 %
Dharkanley		3.32 %
Hamarjajab		0.84 %
Hamarweyne		0.83 %
Hawl-wadaag		0.87 %
Huriwaa		0.28 %
Hodan		1.72 %
Kahda		2.21 %
Karan		2.21 %
Shangani		0.49 %
Shibis		1.12 %
Waberi		2.60 %
Wadajir		1.81 %
Warta Nabadda		0.22 %
Yaqshid	0.50 %	

### 3. LIMITATIONS

The primary objective of this survey effort was to provide a large number of diverse women, including marginalized groups, with an opportunity to voice their experiences and concerns and actively participate in the identification and implementation of development priorities. It is important to highlight several limitations of the research and to keep in mind a number of points when considering in how far survey results reflect the realities of Somali women in general. Some of the limitations of this research are common challenges in most survey efforts of this nature, others result from specific characteristics of the Somali context. A main limitation of the research is that the geographical scope of the survey had to be limited, mainly due to the security context as well as the emergence of COVID-19 and budget constraints. As noted above, the survey could cover main cities in Benadir Regional Administration, South West, Jubbaland, Hirshabelle and Galmudug state. Somaliland was not included in the analysis. Similarly, Puntland could not be included because once the data collection was due to begin flights were canceled in response to the global COVID-19 crisis. Within cities, interviewers focused on areas in which they felt they were able to operate securely. In light of the security context in Galmudug, the research could additionally cover several rural areas in this FMS. The survey results therefore speak more directly to the situation of women living in more secure urban areas in Benadir Regional State, South West, Jubbaland, Hirshabelle and Galmudug state, than to the experiences of women living in other parts of the country. Women's situation may differ in areas not covered by this research, not least due to the different security context in many of these regions and their rural, more remote nature.

Within the areas covered by the research, data collectors were instructed to reach out to women from a wide range of backgrounds, including those most marginalized and often under-represented in decision-making on development priorities, such as IDPs. The responses therefore capture the realities of Somali women from a wide range of backgrounds within these areas. However, the need to adopt snowball sampling reduces the likelihood that the level of representation of different groups of women within the sample fully reflects their distribution in the overall population. As noted above, snowball sampling was adopted repeatedly to ensure safety and security. Accordingly, respondents who had already participated in the research would recommend other households and individuals that interviewees could safely and effectively approach. While this method was critical in ensuring the feasibility of the research and the safety of those participating, it does mean that the sample is not random. Respondents and those they recommend are likely to have characteristics in common, such as similar living environments, socio-economic conditions, family backgrounds, etc. It is therefore possible that certain populations are represented in the sample to a greater or lesser extent than they are in the general population.

However, given limitations in the availability of reliable statistics on overall population characteristics, it is not possible to conclude with certainty in how far the snowball method influenced the survey sample as compared to the overall population. This also makes it more difficult to ascertain the representativeness of the sample in general and does not allow for re-weighting of the sample in line with general population characteristics. As a result, assessments of the representativeness of the sample had to be based primarily on inferences based on the methodology used, the strong contextual knowledge of the staff of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development and others participating in the research, and available data and estimates on population characteristics. The results section will highlight where characteristics of the methodology and sample used must particularly be taken into account when interpreting results. Overall, based on available estimates, and reflecting the survey objective of giving voice to those most marginalized – and the methodology developed on this basis – respondents include a higher percentage of IDPs than is to be expected in the overall population.

To take into account this characteristic, and to more appropriately represent the specific situations of diverse groups of Somali women, the data analysis disaggregated responses based on groups whose situations may differ (including IDPs and non-IDPs, different age groups, etc.), rather than attempting (only) to infer average statistics that may i) obscure the diversity of responses/situations of Somali women and (ii) not be fully representative because the distribution of these groups in the sample may differ from their distribution in the population. However, the results of the analysis rarely suggested strong variation across these groups of women (where relevant, details on variation will be reported in the results section below). Given that women's concerns were not often found to differ significantly across these groups, the relative distribution of different groups in the sample – and the challenges in assessing in how far this represents the overall population – may be less of a concern in interpreting representativeness than may be expected.

An overall challenge in the research process was posed by the lack of seamless availability of internet and power during data collection in some areas, which could have led to possible response bias. However, this bias could be mitigated by adding new features that allowed data collectors to work offline and synchronize the data once re-connected to the internet, as well as adopting face-to-face interviews for the second phase of the research. The research also experienced challenges due to the need to translate questions back and forth between English and Somali and ensuring the meaning of the language remained consistent. This was addressed by thoroughly pre-testing and discussing the research questions with diverse English and Somali speakers at each stage of the process and jointly deciding on the best possible wording on this basis.

In addition, self-selection bias needed to be taken into account during data collection and analysis. The data collectors only interviewed women and girls who voluntarily consented to participate in the survey. Participants may have engaged with the survey because/where they expected to benefit through monetary rewards or humanitarian aid. This could have led to an over-representation of persons in less privileged situations who are in greater need of such benefits. To help address this bias, research assistants were trained to explain upfront the purpose of the survey and to clarify that there was no monetary benefit attached to participation in the survey. More empowered, educated women could also be expected to feel more comfortable to participate in the survey. This could lead to an over-representation of more privileged groups of women. However, the survey, as noted above, made a conscious effort to reach out to vulnerable women, including in IDPS camps, addressing this possible limitation. In addition, the door-to-door method could have been assumed to lead to a sample over-representing women not working or older/retired women because they might be more likely to be found at home. However, due to the COVID-19 response measures in place during the field research, women working also stayed at home. In addition, the research also collected data in public spaces, further addressing a possible bias due to the door-to-door approach.

Especially as some of the survey questions address issues which may be sensitive, respondents may also have had reason not to respond truthfully. To address these concerns, the survey worked with female interviewers who were more likely to establish trust with female respondents. Respondents were also informed that they had a right to refuse to answer any question which they were not comfortable with. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured, improving the likelihood of reliable responses.

The survey may also have experienced social desirability bias: Research respondents may want to be perceived as being good citizens and bias their responses accordingly. Notably, research assistants had been coached on how to introduce the NDP-9 goals and the outline of the Somali Women's Charter to participants ahead of the interview, as part of explaining the rationale for the survey and to help raise awareness. It is possible that some respondents may have adjusted their responses to approve alignment with these documents. While these limitations should be taken into account throughout, the analysis below attempts to highlight where they are particularly relevant in interpreting results. Despite these challenges involved in conducting research of this nature, and especially in the Somali context, the survey succeeded in its objective of reaching a large number of diverse women, including marginalized groups who are often excluded from the identification and implementation of development priorities.

## 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings summarized in this report are the result of the survey carried out in the spring of 2020 by the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MoWHRD), in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, so as to (i) increase the voice and participation of diverse women, including marginalized women, in identifying and taking forward the next generation of development priorities (ii) help establish a baseline of data, which can inform solutions for gender equality and women's empowerment and build a system to monitor progress as per the National Development Plan (NDP-9), 2020-2024 commitments, and the Somali Women's Charter and (iii) enhance women's awareness of the National Development Plan and the significance of the Somali Women's Charter as a common platform to support a change agenda for all to strive for. Data was collected from 10309 women and girls from Benadir, South West State, Galmudug, Jubbaland, and Hirshabelle. Out of the 10309 questionnaires, 9 were removed from the analysis due to incomplete responses. This resulted in a total of 10 300 questionnaires ultimately used in the analysis. The findings are reported under the different themes approached in the questionnaire. The report starts by providing background information on respondents gathered through the questionnaires.

### 4.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

Background information on respondents was sought by establishing their age, place of residence, settlement status, marital status and disability status.

#### 4.1.1 Age of respondents

Age was categorized as; 15-18; 19-24; 25-40; 41-60; and those who were from 61 years and above. The results are summarized in Figure 1.

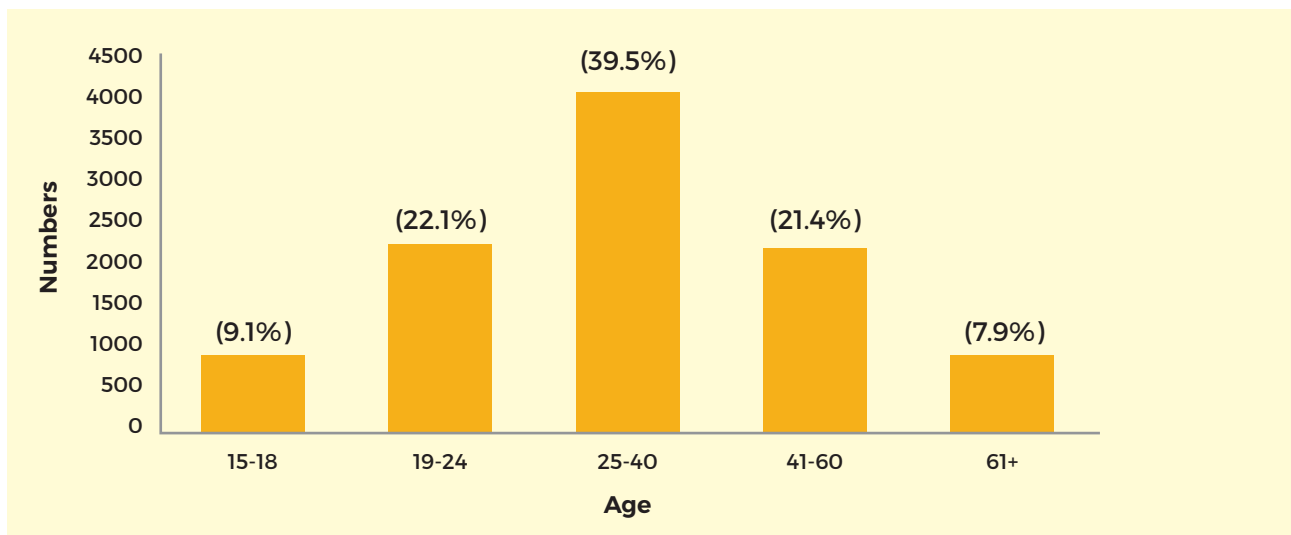


FIGURE 1: Age of respondents

Most respondents (39.5%) were aged between 25 and 40 years. Approximately one fifth of respondents were aged between 19 and 24 (22.1%) and 41 and 60 years (21.4%). 9.1 % of respondents were between 15 and 18 years old. The lowest number of respondents was aged 61 years and above (7.9%).

#### 4.1.2 Area where respondents lived

Reflecting the geographical coverage of the survey, women who responded to this survey lived in 5 regions namely: Benadir (26.7 %), South West State (24.9 %), Galmudug (21.3 %), Jubbaland (16.7 %) and Hirshabelle (10.4 %). Within these regions, given that the focus of this research was on cities, most respondents (93.1%) lived in urban areas while the remaining 6.9 % lived in rural areas. 6.2 % of the respondents reported being part of the diaspora.

### 4.1.3 Displacement and eviction

Reflecting the focus on IDPS camps in the first phase of the research, more than half of the respondents (61.9 %) in this survey reported being displaced. Approximately one third of all respondents reported that they had been forcefully evicted from their dwelling (31.6%) and a similar, slightly higher percentage (32.6%) reported that they were currently threatened to be evicted.

### 4.1.4 Marital status

The respondents were asked to indicate their marital status. The responses are summarized in Figure 2.

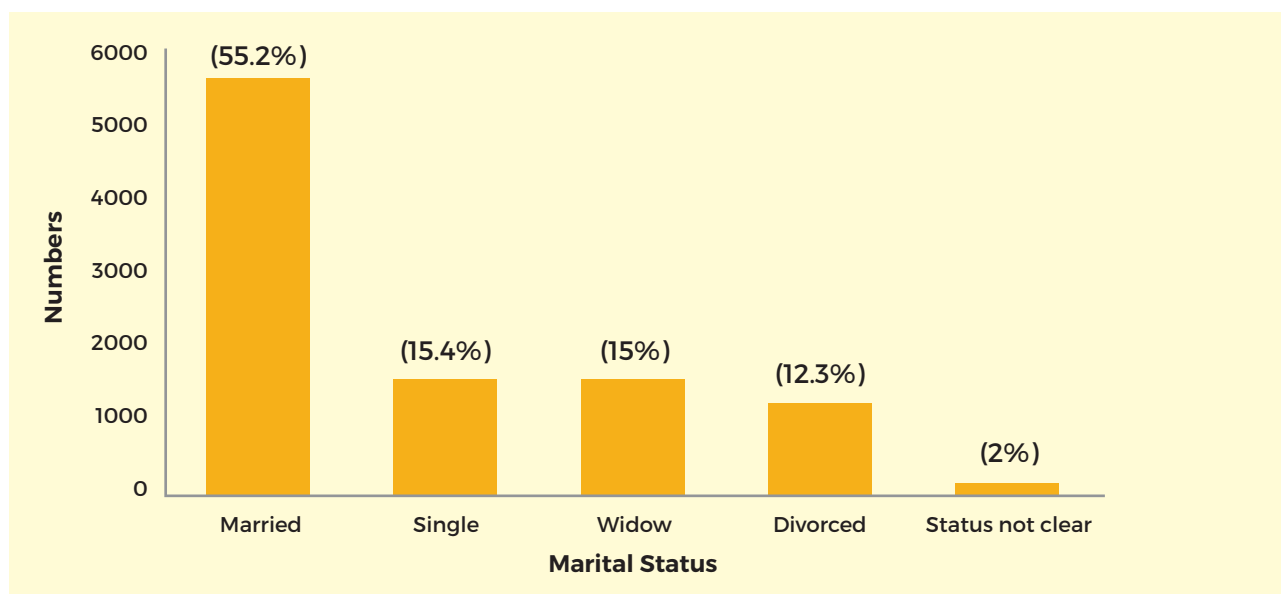


FIGURE 2: Marital Status of respondents

More than half (55.2%) of the respondents reported currently being married while 15% of respondents indicated that they were widowed and 12.3% reported being divorced. 15.4% reported that they had never been married. Two-thirds of the respondents (68.1%) indicated that they were married before they reached the age of 18.

### 4.1.5 Disability status

Somalia’s history of conflict and violence has exacerbated the situation for persons with disabilities, who are among the poorest and most marginalized. Among the respondents of this survey, 5.9 % were persons with disabilities.

## 4.2 EDUCATION

Education is both an end in itself and an indispensable force for development. Education and lifelong learning opportunities are critical in enabling men and women to obtain the skills and knowledge required to exploit opportunities, to fully participate in society and contribute to sustainable development. Somalia’s current National Development Plan (NDP) recognizes improving education and training as a key element in accelerating Somalia’s development, noting that “Current education [...] outcomes, especially for women and girls, threaten to limit the human development potential of the next generation, unless investments are made now” (31). This is in line with Agenda 2030, which affirms the role of education as a catalyst for development and establishes inclusive and equitable quality education as a sustainable development goal to be achieved in the next ten years (SDG 4).

Women and girls’ education is both their right and has a particular wide range of effects on gender equality as well as development outcomes: Women’s education can reduce poverty, infant and maternal mortality, early marriage and the risk of early childbearing. It also improves women’s self-confidence and access to decision-making and can reduce tolerance of domestic violence (UNESCO, 2014; Wodon et al., 2018). In this context, SDG 4 specifically calls for accelerated efforts to eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.



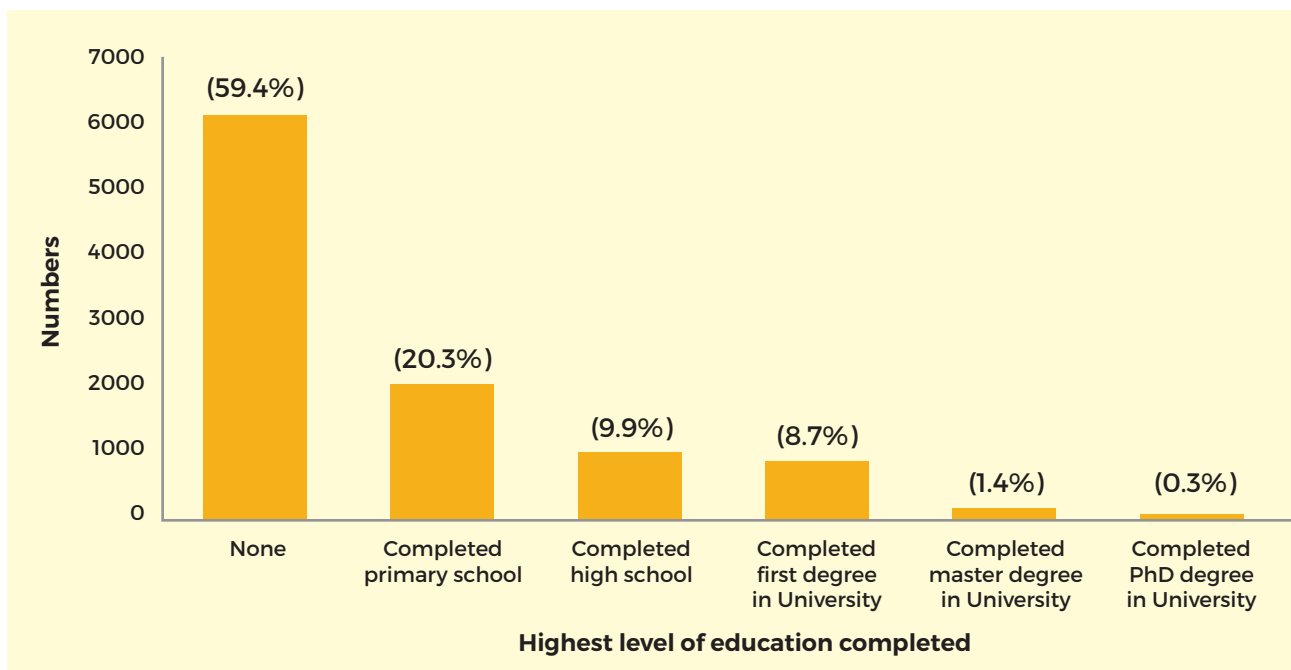
Somalia faces significant challenges in this context. The history of conflict, drought and flood has forced many children and youth out of school and eroded governance institutions. While the transition from conflict has provided opportunities to reconstruct the education system, most schools continue to be owned by the community or managed by private-sector umbrella organisations. A decentralized education system is currently being operationalized by the Federal Ministry of Education. Parents tend to enrol their children in traditional Qur'anic schools before they enrol them in the formal primary education schooling system, especially in rural and Nomadic areas.

Women and girls face additional challenges in accessing education. These include particular safety and security concerns, patriarchal social norms, female genital mutilation (FGM), low availability of toilets at school and a lack of female teachers. In the Somali Women's Charter, Somali women and girls called on the State to further strengthen their right to education and for efforts to increase compulsory attainment of secondary education, access to tertiary education, skills training courses for women and girls and additional affirmative action in securing young girls' exposure to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

#### 4.2.1 Formal educational attainment

The results of this survey affirm the critical importance of progress in women and girls' access to education. As part of the survey, women were asked about their educational attainment. As highlighted in Figure 3, more than half (59.4%) of all women participating in this survey reported having completed no formal education. Only one fifth of respondents (20.3%) reported having completed primary school level and less than ten percent (9.9%) had completed high school. 10.4 % of respondents had completed higher education, with 8.7 % of the women reporting having completed a first degree in a university; 1.4 % a master's degree and 0.3 % a PhD degree. Among women who reported having been married before the age of 18, a higher percentage, almost two thirds (64.8 %), reported not having completed any formal education. Similarly, among women who were not married, somewhat fewer respondents reported having no formal education (41.3 %) than among those who were married (62.7%) or among those who had been married and were now widowed (69.2 %) or divorced (55.8%). These associations may indicate a connection between marrying and not enrolling in/discontinuing education and/or women with more education getting married later. Overall, educational attainment has been found to be significantly lower for women than for men (Directorate of National Statistics, 2020).

While 40.6 % of all respondents reported having completed formal education, only 30.2 % of the respondents received a certificate. This means that even among the minority of women who completed formal schooling, a considerable number failed to obtain an official confirmation of their degree, reducing their prospects for employment or for continuing their education. Women/girls may fail to obtain such an official certification, even if they graduated school, because their families lack the means to pay for such a certificate or because they do not intend to move on to secondary school, higher education or formal employment, where such certificates tend to be required.



**FIGURE 3: Educational background of respondents**

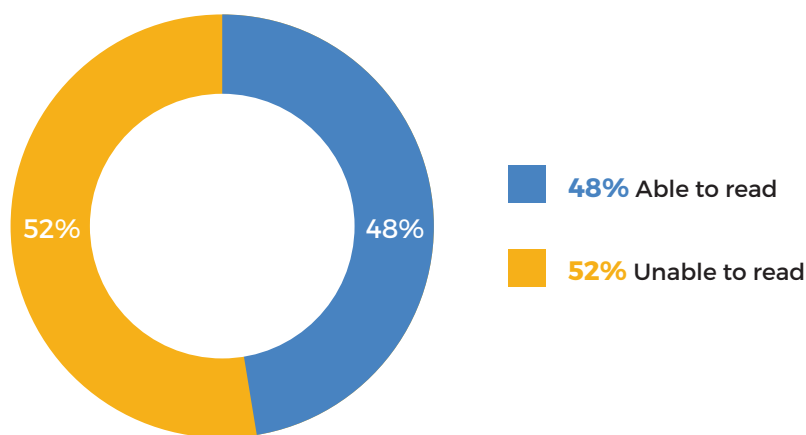
1 Despite using a different methodology the Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS) (2020) similarly found that 59.4 % of women (in this case aged 15-49) in urban areas have never attended formal schooling.

Women were also asked about their childrens' access to education. Confirming a lack of education even in younger generations, only half (52.2%) of respondents reported that their young daughters had access to educational programs, that is, any form of training or capacitation, which may include vocational training for young women or educational and skills-training programmes run by NGOs. The percentage of respondents' young daughters accessing formal education can be expected to be lower. A slightly higher percentage, 54.4%, stated that their young sons had access to educational programs.

#### 4.2.2 Literacy

Women were further asked about their literacy. As highlighted in Figure 4, more than half (52%) of respondents reported being unable to read. Only 48% reported being able to read. These results were similar for displaced and non-displaced respondents.<sup>2</sup> Across all population groups in Somalia, literacy has been found to be higher for men than for women (Directorate of National Statistics, 2020).

While the findings of the present survey point to extremely serious gaps in women's education, the results of the Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS) (Directorate of National Statistics, 2020) suggest that educational attainment and literacy can be expected to be even lower in rural areas and among Nomadic populations, which were not the focus of this survey.



**FIGURE 4: Literacy among respondents**

#### 4.2.3 Religious education

Despite gaps in formal educational attainment, an overwhelming majority of respondents, (91.4%) attended Quranic School. The responses confirm that parents have continued to send their children to Quranic schools and the significance of these institutions in building knowledge and awareness among Somali women (and men). Quranic schools are more accessible than formal schooling because they charge lower fees, which can often also be paid in-kind and because teachers are drawn from the community and will remain with the community in cases of emergencies and displacement. As noted above, even parents who are able to send their children to formal educational institutions often consider it appropriate for them to first attend Quranic school.

### 4.3 ECONOMIC STATUS

The Federal Government of Somalia has made a commitment to providing job-creating opportunities, economic growth and building economic inclusion, with particular emphasis on creating opportunities for young people and women, as highlighted in NDP-9.<sup>3</sup> Global evidence shows that women's economic empowerment makes a critical contribution to gender equality, the welfare of families and communities, and can contribute to post-conflict recovery (Justino, 2012). During the Somali Women's Convention, participants highlighted that women have provided the backbone of Somalia's economy. Their roles increased further during conflict, with women becoming breadwinners for most Somali families. Participants in the Somali Women's Convention affirmed that women's economic empowerment is critical to the future of Somalia, contributing directly to the countries' economy, from the level of the family to the national level (Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, Federal Government of Somalia, Somali Women's Convention Report, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Again, despite using a different methodology, the Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS) found a similar literacy rate (of 50 %) among women in urban areas.

<sup>3</sup> Pillar 3: Economic development.

#### 4.3.1 The role of the women in providing for households

The survey results affirmed the important role Somali women play in providing for Somali households. As highlighted in Figure 5, almost two-thirds of the women responded that they were the sole breadwinner in their household (62.4 %), while almost three quarters of the women (74.2 %) reported that they were the main person responsible for the income of the household. As highlighted in Figure 6, two thirds of the women (64 %) reported that they had children who depended on them economically. 8% of the respondents provided for a husband, 9 % for an elderly relative and 6 % for a person living with disability. 13 % reported that other family members depended on their income. Almost a quarter of the respondents reported that their household was female-led (24.8 %).



Respondents and their families during data collection.

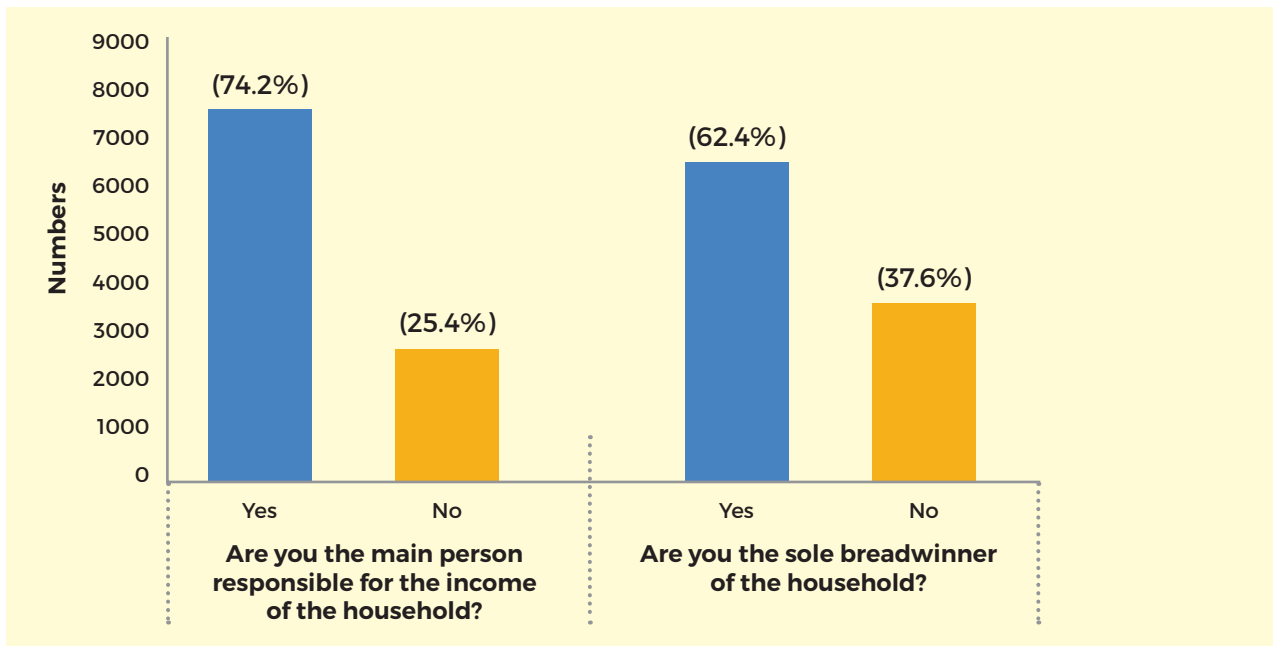


FIGURE 5: Contribution of respondents' income to household income

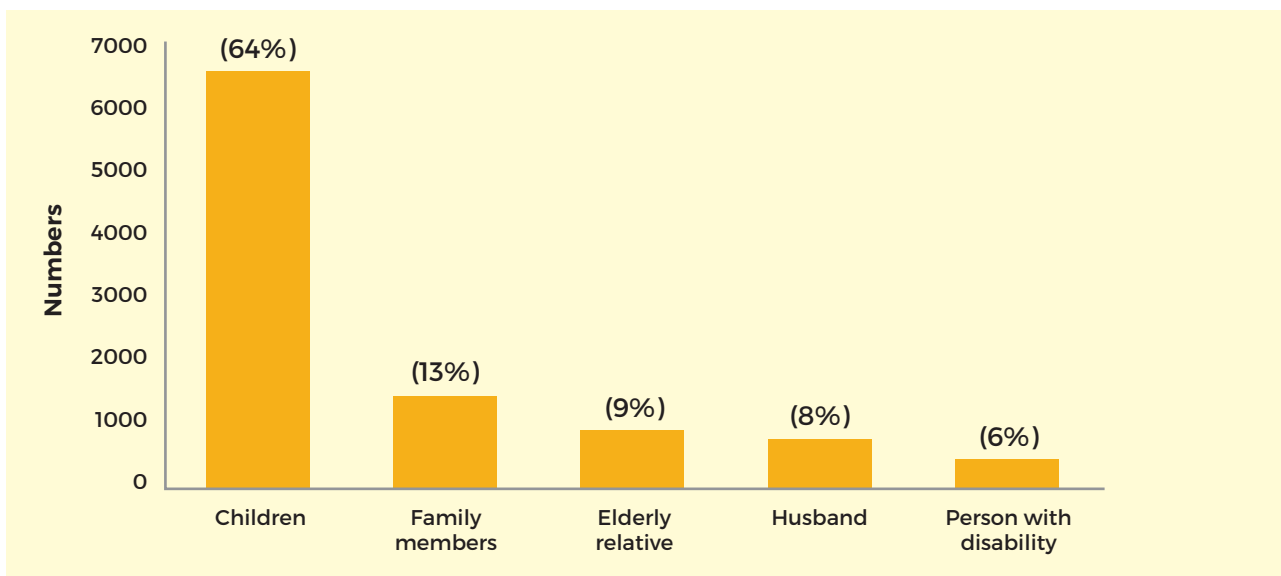


FIGURE 6: People dependent on respondents' income.

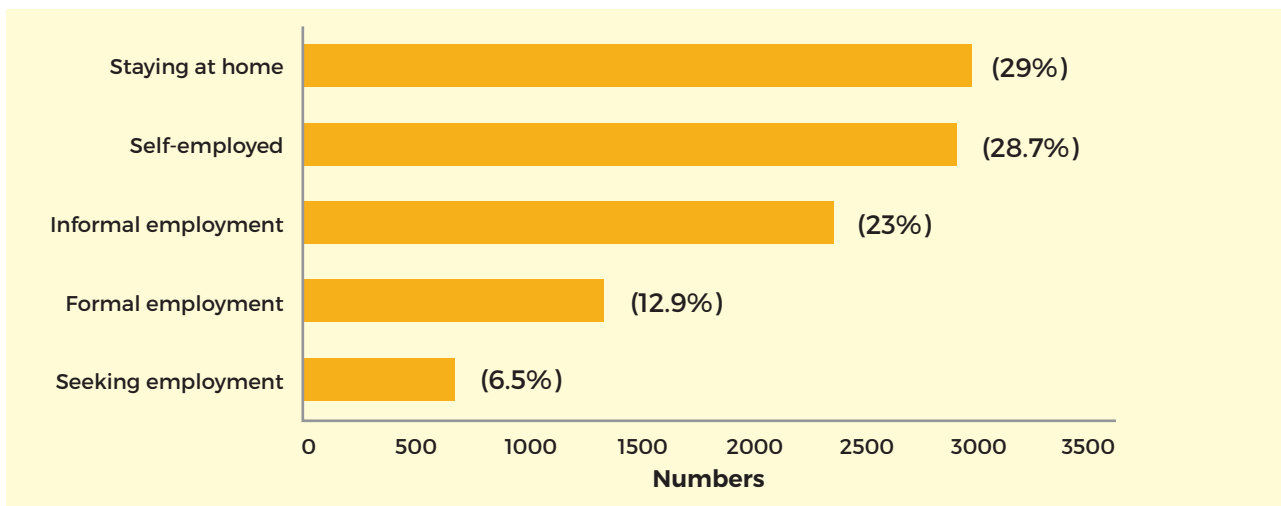


FIGURE 7: Employment status of respondents



### 4.3.2 Employment status of respondents

Women were also asked about their employment status. Despite their critical economic roles, as shown in Figure 7, only 12.9% of respondents reported being in formal employment. The majority of respondents who were economically active, that is, worked outside of the home were self-employed (28.7% out of all respondents) or in informal employment (23% out of all respondents). 6.5 % of the respondents were seeking employment. 29 % of respondents were housewives.

The gaps in access to education highlighted in the previous section help account for the lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector for Somali women. Further analysis showed that gaps in employment of women in Somalia have a significant relationship with their education level. Only 3.6 % of the (majority of) women who had not completed formal education were in formal employment, compared to 20.9 % of those who had completed primary school and 23.3 % among those who had completed secondary school. Among those who had completed a university degree, 41.3 % were in formal employment, rising to 50.7 % among those with a Master's Degree and 58.3 % of those with a PhD.

The National Development Plan recognizes exclusion from economic participation and the formal labour force disproportionately affects women and that women are more vulnerable to poverty. Especially in light of the critical contributions made by Somali women in providing for families and households – as highlighted above - the NDP-9 is right to emphasize that “Economic inclusion of women [...] becomes an exciting opportunity. Even modest improvements in labour force participation, health, education and mortality rates will lead to measurable improvements in the GDP growth and the lifting of households out of poverty” (37). To achieve progress in women’s economic empowerment the Somali Women’s Charter calls for specific steps to strengthen in practice women’s socio-economic rights; for women to be fully represented in decision-making on economic priorities; and for the private sector to increase the representation of women in their top management and leadership positions and provide opportunities and affirmative action for women, including younger women.



A woman responds to the survey while selling vegetables.



### 4.3.3 Age when respondents started working

Women respondents were further asked to indicate when they started working. The largest share of respondents (41.9 %) started working during the age bracket for school attendance: Almost one fifth (17.9%) of respondents started working before the age of 15, while most respondents, almost one fourth (24%) started working when they were between 15 and 18 years old. 21.2% of respondents started working between 19 and 24 years old. About a quarter of respondents never worked (26.6%).

### 4.3.4 Access to financial resources

Access to – and control over – financial resources are important variables for poverty reduction and women’s economic empowerment as well as their power and autonomy in decision-making – which can in turn impact women’s individual wellbeing as well as the welfare of their households. The survey therefore further investigated women’s access to cash and the sources of the cash they are able to access. Overall, more than a third (37.7%) of the women reported that they have no access to cash. Of those who have access to cash (62.3%), more than half 54.6% indicated that the source is from their own earning (representing about one third (34.1 %) of all respondents). Other sources of cash included income from husbands (a quarter of those who had access to cash, 26 %, representing 16.2% of all respondents), and other family members (16.3 % of those who had access to cash, representing 10.2% of all respondents). Only a very small proportion of women in Somali receive cash through remittances (1.8 % of those who have access to cash, representing 1.1 % of all respondents), WFP support (0.8 % of those with access to cash, representing 0.5 % of all respondents) or a bank loan (0.6 % of those with access to cash, representing 0.4 % of all respondents).

### 4.3.5 Control over financial resources and use of banking

The survey project further obtained information regarding control of cash and possession of bank accounts as well as prevalence and use of mobile banking among women in Somalia. Out of the women who have access to cash, as many as 93.3 % reported that they themselves manage the money they have access to. The remaining 6.7 % reported that they do not personally manage their cash.

More than three quarters (76.5%) of respondents reported that they did not have a bank account. However, most respondents (86%) reported that they use their phone for mobile-phone based money transfer services.

### 4.3.6 Use of financial resources

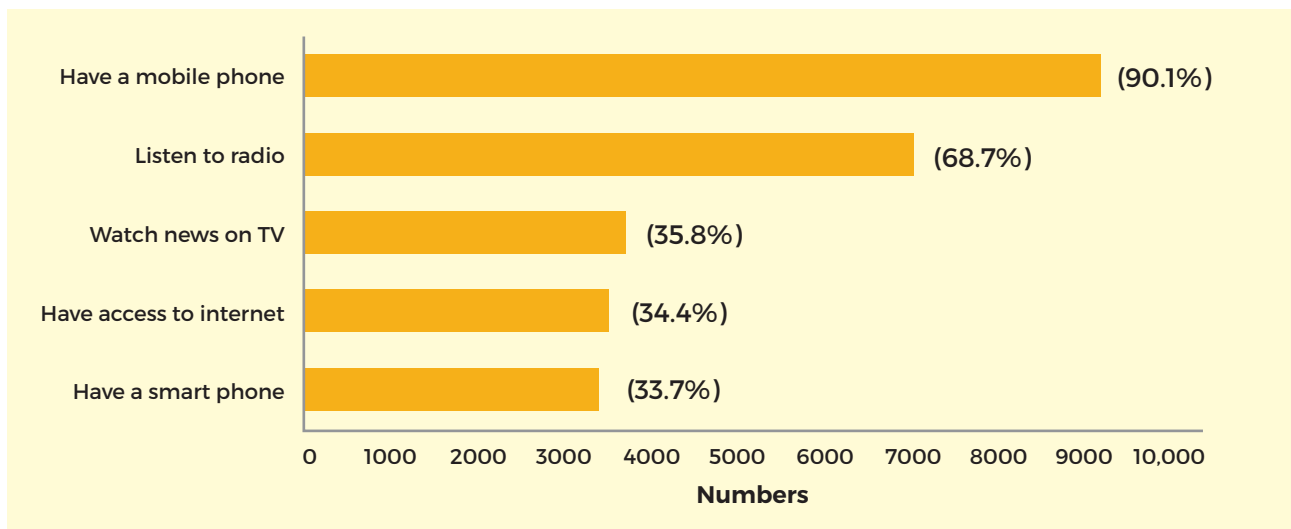
To further understand the financial needs and strains of women in Somalia, the survey additionally assessed how respondents used cash. Women were able to indicate multiple uses of cash. Women reported spending most cash to meet the most basic needs. More than half of responses (55%) noted that money would typically be spent on food. Other expenses included spending money on cattle (included in 15 % of responses), crops (8%), goats (6 %), houses (5 %), other services used by the public (4%) and non-food items (4 %). Only 1 % reported that money was spent on education, medicine and other needs, respectively. Women were also asked if they were able to save money. The majority of respondents, almost two thirds (63.5%), reported not being able to save money.

## 4.4 COMMUNICATION

Ability to communicate and means of communication among citizens are a critical element of national and social development. The internet, mobile phones and mass media provide men and women with key tools to access information, including on government policies, on health related issues or for educational programmes. They also provide important avenues for them to share their views and concerns.

While the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector in Somalia is growing quickly, the majority of rural areas of the country do not yet have access to reliable mobile and internet services (Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, 2020). Somalia's National Development Plan identifies a number of priority interventions to address shortcoming in the ICT sector, including improving the existing policy and regulatory frameworks; expanding and improving ICT infrastructure; to draft a policy on digital financial services; and other interventions.

This survey was interested in establishing the nature and means of communication which are used by Somali women. The means of communication available to respondents are shown in Figure 8.



**FIGURE 8: Means of communication available to respondents**

As highlighted in Figure 8, the most common tool for communication used by respondents is a mobile phone: 90.1% of women participating in the survey reported that they had a mobile phone. A third (33.7%) of all women reported owning a smart phone. Slightly more than a third (34.4%) reported having access to the internet through any means. While the Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS), despite using a different methodology, similarly found that about one third of women living in urban areas had used the internet, it confirmed that these percentages dropped significantly outside of urban areas, falling to 12 per cent and 1 per cent of women living in rural and nomadic areas, respectively (Directorate of National Statistics, 2020). In the present survey, approximately two thirds (68.7%) of female respondents reported listening to the radio. About a third (35.8%) reported they watched news on TV..

## 4.5 ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

NDP-9 expresses the Federal government's commitment to improving access by all Somali citizens to health and other essential services, including social protection systems in times of extreme need. A critical element of this survey was to investigate accessibility of basic services by Somali women.

### 4.5.1 Access to Water

Access to clean water is a critical element in reducing exposure to preventable diseases (such as diarrhoea and dysentery). Related sicknesses can place significant burdens on health services, prevent children from going to school and reduce household income. In Somalia, droughts have exacerbated water shortages and contributed to contamination of water. Access to clean drinking water is one of the targets outlined in Somalia's National Development Plan (NDP-9). At a global level, SDG 6 calls for the achievement of universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030.

In this context, the survey investigated the quality of water and the type of water sources available to respondents. The quality of water poses a problem for a large share of respondents, even in the urban areas that were the focus of this research. Only slightly more than half of the respondents, 53.9% reported having access to what they would assess to be clean drinking water. Access to water perceived as clean drinking water is a challenge to the remaining 46.1% of the women participating in the survey. These percentages likely only reflect the situation in the urban areas covered in the survey. In wider parts of Somalia, access to safe and adequate supplies of water is a greater challenge (Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, 2020).

The common types of water accessed by respondents are highlighted in Table 2.



A data collector during the research.

TYPE OF WATER ACCESSED	PERCENT
Communal water tap	42.2
Water in the dwelling apartment /place	32.9
Borehole	15.9
Other water sources	4.7
River	4.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>

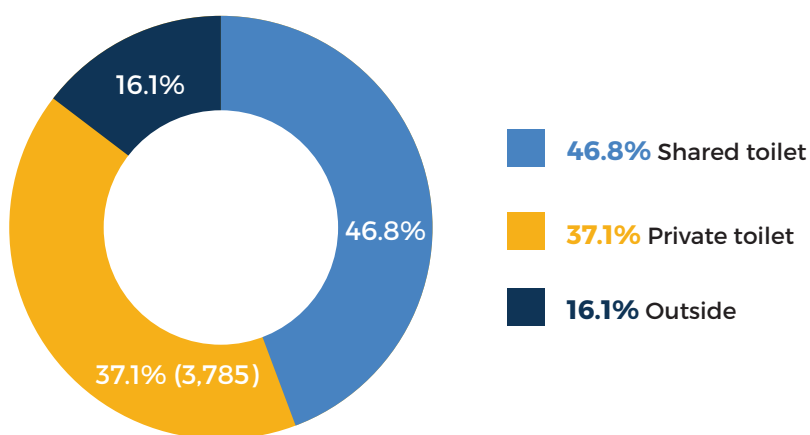
**TABLE 2: Type of water accessed by respondents**

Most respondents (42.2%), reported accessing water through a communal water tap. Approximately one third (32.9%) of respondents reported accessing water in their dwelling places/ apartments. 15.9 % of respondents accessed water through boreholes, while 4.3 % access water from rivers. 4.7% of respondents access water through other sources not specified in this survey.

#### 4.5.2 Access to Toilets

Appropriate sanitation is critical to human dignity, for the prevention of a range of diseases, including diarrheal diseases, as well as for security. In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly declared sanitation a universal human right. SDG 6.1. calls for the achievement of access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and for an end to open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

In the context of this survey, 84.1% of respondents reported having access to toilets, while 15.9% of women indicated not having access to toilets.



**FIGURE 9: Toilet accessed by respondents**

As shown in Figure 9, the greatest share of respondents (46.8 %) access shared toilets. 37.1% have private toilets while 16.1% responded that they go outside, mostly referring to open defecation. More than a quarter of the women (27.7 %) reported that they did not feel safe and secure when walking to or using the toilets. The remaining 72.3 % reported that they felt safe in this context.

#### 4.5.3 Access to Health Services

Somalia's National Development Plan recognizes that "Health will be the driver of sustainable development that will produce a healthy and productive society that effectively contributes to poverty reduction." This reflects the aspiration of SDG 3 of ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all.

Somalia faces significant challenges in this regard. More than two decades of conflict have strained the availability of health services. Currently, the health system consists of approximately 106 hospitals/referral health centres, 391 MCH/Health centres and 620 health posts. Only about four skilled health workers are available per 10, 000 citizens (Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, 2020). The NDP-9 acknowledges that the current provision of health is dominated by private sector providers, which makes it difficult for the poor to access health care. Gender inequalities further limit access to health care for Somali women and girls (Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, 2020).

In this survey, almost a third of respondents (32.3%) reported having no access to health facilities. Access to health services can be expected to be even lower in rural areas and among nomadic populations than in the urban areas, which were the focus of this research. In the Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS) common challenges in accessing health services reported by women included lack of money, distance to the health facility, not wanting to go alone to seek health care as well as major problems posed by the need to obtain permission, usually required from a husband (National Directorate of Statistics, 2020).

The NDP recognizes the particular urgency of these challenges in the Somali context, with a current maternal mortality rate of approximately 732 per 100, 000 live births (Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, 2020). NDP-9 consequently commits to supporting maternal health care and children's health, to reduce levels of female genital mutilation, as well as the need to target health services to under-served areas and vulnerable groups, including those in IDP camps. In the Somali Women's Charter, women called for the State to further strengthen in practice their rights in health, including for vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities, older people, minorities and internally displaced people.



#### 4.5.4 Access to Roads and Transport

The National Development Plan – 9 highlights transport as a key enabler in improving productivity, access to markets, living standards, security, and also in facilitating creation of employment. SDG 11 establishes as a global development objective to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and other persons, by 2030 (SDG 11.2).

In this context, the survey assessed women’s access to roads and means of transportation. The majority of respondents reported having access to roads (83.6 %). Most women (84.3 %) said that they use public transport as means of transportation as shown in Figure 10. Only 5.8% of respondents use their own vehicle.

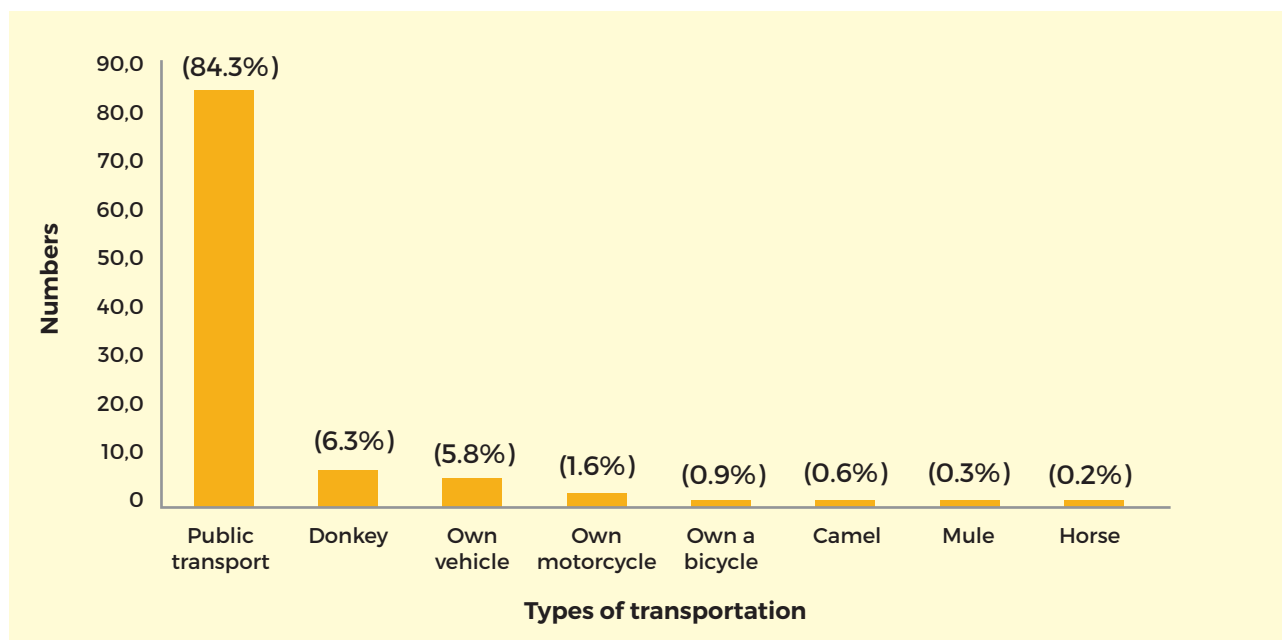


FIGURE 10: Common transport among respondents

## 4.6 CLIMATE CHANGE

Natural calamities such as drought and flooding undermine economic and human development. They can cause mobility and displacement of people in search of safety and food. Somalia has experienced major climate-induced shocks on a 2 to 5-year cycle. These include severe droughts, flooding and cyclones, which have caused massive displacement and crisis for basic supplies. NDP-9 outlines priority interventions in each pillar to prevent and respond to environmental crises. This echoes SDG 13 and its calls to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to eliminate climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries. SDG 13 also calls for the promotion of mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.

This reflects the fact that the effects of climate-related emergencies are distinct and can be especially disastrous for women and children. However, women and girls are also less likely to receive tailored support to cope with the distinct effects of climate-induced shocks on their lives. In the Somali Women’s Charter, women highlighted that “Climate change poses distinct, enormous burdens for women and girls. Sustainable development and resilience can only be achieved if women and girls are empowered to equally contribute to the resolution of climate change problems and their differential experiences are fully addressed.”

In this context, women participating in the survey were asked about their experiences of climate change and natural calamities. Almost half (47%) of all women participating in the survey reported having been affected by droughts or floods in the last two years. Approximately half (49.7%) of the women said that they had fled their homes because of either drought or flood. Out of the women who had been displaced due to drought and flood, 67.9 % plan to return to where they fled from, while the remaining 32.1 % do not plan to return.

Almost half 48.9% of the women reported that they had previously lost livelihoods or livestock as a result of drought and flooding. The specific items lost Somali women are highlighted in Table 3.

ITEMS LOST	PERCENT
Goats	57%
Housing	47%
Harvest	41%
Cows	35%
Camel	11%
Transportation	7%
Others	7%

**TABLE 3: What respondents lost during drought or flood**

As highlighted in Table 3, information gathered indicated that the majority of the respondents who lost livelihoods and livestock lost goats (57 %), while many also lost housing (47 %), crops/harvest (41 %), cattle (35 %) camels (11 %) and transportation (7 %). A large number of respondents lost multiple of these items.

## 4.7 SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and security is a key priority in its own right and essential for economic development, poverty reduction and effective governance. Recognizing these connections, Agenda 2030 establishes the promotion of peaceful societies as a key development objective (SDG 16) and aims to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere (SDG 16.1). Somalia's National Development Plan recognizes security and the rule of law as a central pillar for Somalia's development and commits to "establish unified, capable, accountable and rights-based Somali federal security institutions that provide basic safety and security for citizens."

Due to the history of conflict, terrorism and other burdens, Somalia has faced significant challenges in this regard. These have affected the security of women and girls in serious and distinct ways, including through an increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence. The Somali Women's Charter recognizes that "Somali women and girls are impacted by both conflict-related sexual violence and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation. This violence destroys societal cohesion and women's lives, undermining the capacity of women to meaningfully participate and contribute to societal development. Only with zero tolerance for GBV and harmful traditional practices will Somalia become a prosperous nation."



One of the data collectors during the research.

In this context, the survey investigated women's experience of safety and security. 17.3% of respondents felt insecure within their community/village. It is worth noting that these percentages represent women's perceptions of security in the more secure areas of the country/towns, which the survey was able to access.

Notably, women did not feel significantly safer inside the home than they did outside of the home: Almost as many women as those who felt insecure in their community/village reported feeling insecure within the home itself (13.2 %). A fifth of respondents (20.4%) reported having been harmed physically by a person from their family in the last year. The results of the Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS) suggest that the most common perpetrators of physical violence against women are husbands. The SHDS further highlights that the vast majority of women do not seek any help when they experience emotional, sexual or physical violence – even though many of them sustain injuries as a result (Directorate of National Statistics, 2020). In the survey summarized in this report, somewhat more than half (57%) of respondents indicated that they have freedom to leave the place where they are currently living and choose to live alone elsewhere. This suggests that for 43% of respondents, a very basic barrier to escaping a violent home may be their lack of freedom to choose a different place to live. A quarter of respondents (24%) reported that they had been assaulted by a person more powerful than them in the last year. As noted above, more than a quarter of the women (27.7 %) reported that they did not feel safe and secure when walking to or using toilets.

Given sensitivities in discussing violence, especially within the home, and the focus of the survey on physical violence (leaving aside psychological violence, which constitutes an important part of domestic violence and violence against women) the percentages emerging from the survey likely underreport women's insecurity. This situation contravenes the Agenda 2030, the Somali Women's Charter and derails the achievement of the NDP-9 which identified security as a priority poverty reduction strategy.

## 4.8 ACCESS TO SHELTER

Agenda 2030 commits to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable and specifically, by 2030, to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing (SDG 11).

As part of the survey, respondents were asked about their access to shelter and the type of shelter available to them. As highlighted in Figure 11, the majority of respondents (73.1%) were living in temporary shelters, that is, in makeshift shelter, iron sheet houses and tents. The most common type of shelter reported by respondents was makeshift shelter (29%). A similar percentage, 28.5%, reported living in iron sheet houses. As many as 7.2 % of respondents reported living in bushes/ grass-thatched houses.

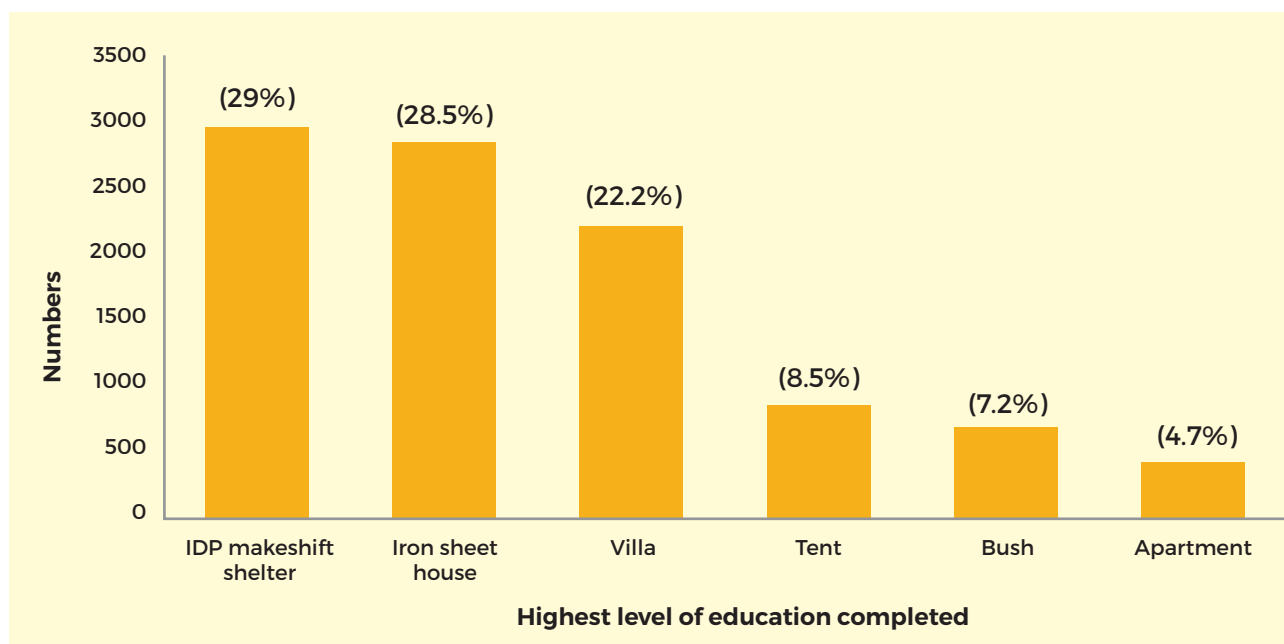


FIGURE 11: Common types of shelter among respondents

## 4.9 LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

NDP-9 recognizes effective and inclusive politics is a sine qua non for reducing insecurity, strengthening the rule of law, improving governance, and accelerating economic and social development. Inclusive politics therefore serves as one of the central pillars of the NDP. Women's leadership and full participation is a critical element of inclusive politics: It is a fundamental right, a precondition for addressing women's distinct experiences, including those highlighted in this report, and for mobilizing all of societies' insight, skill and potential for a country's development. In the Somali Women's Charter, women affirmed that "Without women's political participation there can be no sustained peace and development" and called for equal participation in all political and peacebuilding processes through a 50 % quota for women in public institutions. Similarly, Agenda 2030 commits to ensure "women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life" (SDG 5.5).

The survey included several questions regarding women, leadership and access to decision-making. Almost one third of respondents (29 %) reported being members of a women's organization. Almost two-thirds of respondents (61.4%) felt that they did not have opportunities to participate in decision-making. An overwhelming majority of respondents (92%) noted that they would like an opportunity to participate in decision-making. Significantly, a vast majority of respondents (86.6 %) noted that it would be easier to access a decision-maker if that person was a woman.

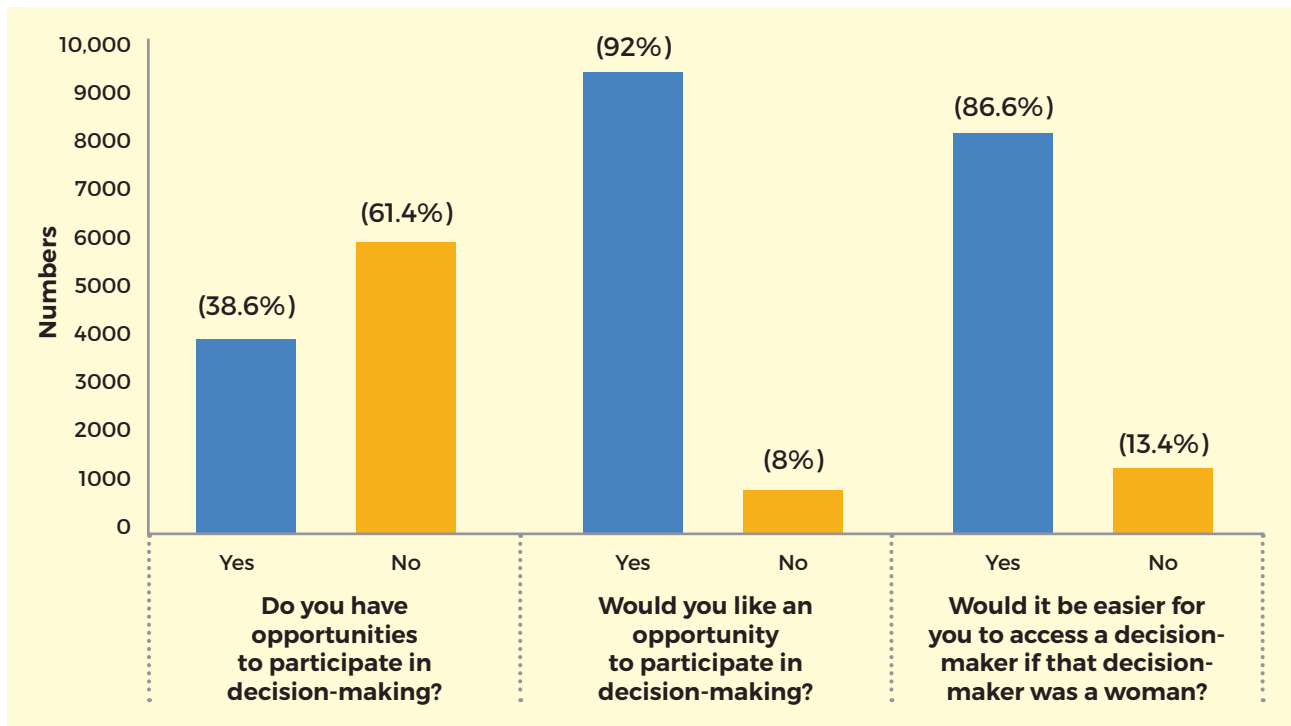


FIGURE 12: Access to decision-making



## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this survey affirm the demands and observations of the Somali Women's Charter. As highlighted in the Charter, women can and do play a critical role in sustaining Somali households, communities and society. Almost three quarters of the 10 300 women who participated in this survey, for example, reported that they serve as main or sole breadwinners for their families. With their income, the vast majority of the women participating in the survey provided for children and/or wider family, including elderly relatives, people living with disability and, in many cases, husbands. For these and other reasons, empowering women and girls is both a key objective in its own right and central for the advancement of Somali households and society.

The results of the survey also highlight the urgent need for real progress in this area, pointing to a wide range of inter-related challenges faced by Somali women. Despite their critical economic roles, only 12.9% of respondents reported being in formal employment. One of the factors contributing to women's lack of opportunities in the formal sector is their extremely limited access to education, with the majority of respondents (59 %) having completed no formal education. Women participating in this survey did not feel significantly safer inside the home than they did outside of the home, and a fifth of respondents (20.4%) reported having been harmed physically by a person from their family in the last year. Addressing these and other challenges highlighted in this survey would require enabling women to participate and share their experiences in decision-making on development priorities. However, while an overwhelming majority of respondents (92%) noted that they would like an opportunity to participate in decision-making, almost two-thirds of respondents (61.4%) felt that they did not have opportunities to participate in decision-making. These and other gaps affirm the urgent need for progress on the joint demands women agreed in the Somali Women's Charter in these and other areas.

While the survey results point to many areas for progress, they also suggest some opportunities and ways forward. The vast majority of women (86.6 %) highlighted that they would have more access to a decision-maker if that person was a woman. This points to the importance of promoting women's equal representation in decision-making positions – including through the 50 % quota demanded by the Somali Women's Charter – both as an end itself and as a means to develop public institutions that are accessible and responsive to the needs and concerns of all members of society. In addition, almost one third of respondents (29 %) reported being members of a women's organization – highlighting women's current and potential mobilization in favour of gender equality and community welfare.



Deqa Yasin Hagi Yusuf, Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Federal Government of Somalia, with female members of the District Council of Dinsoor, which comprises 50 % women, fulfilling the Somali Women's Charter demand for increased representation of women at all levels of decision-making.

What is more, while serious gaps exist in access to formal education, an overwhelming majority of respondents, (91.4%) attended Quranic School. This confirms the wide accessibility of these institutions and their significance as a potential entry point for work on gender equality and women's empowerment. Finally, the vast majority of survey respondents (90.1%) reported having access to a mobile phone, while a third (33.7%) reported owning a smart phone. This highlights the potential of reaching a wide range of women through mobile phones for a diversity of purposes, including training, awareness-raising, civic participation and data collection.

The survey results highlight the need for action in a wide range of areas affecting the lives of women and girls. The following next steps and recommendations emerge as particularly urgent:

1. **Take forward implementation of the Somali Women's Charter**, including by finalizing the development of – and ensuring sufficient resourcing for – Somalia's National Action Plan for the implementation of the Somali Women's Charter and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and mobilizing additional resources for the action plans for Charter implementation developed by the Federal Member States.
2. **Ensure dedicated attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in the implementation of NDP-9** and women's full participation in the identification of the next generation of development priorities.
3. **Accelerate support for women's equal participation in public life**, including by realizing the 50/50 quota called for in the Somali Women's Charter, and providing support for female candidates and representatives during and after the 2020/21 elections.
4. **Invest in the education of women and girls** as another priority concern and identify opportunities to use the wide accessibility of Quranic schools as an entry point for work on gender equality and women's empowerment.
5. **Remove barriers that prevent women's full participation in economic activities and the formal sector**, including by closing gender-based education gaps.
6. **Strengthen access to basic services**, including equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and health services.
7. **Accelerate efforts to address the distinct effects of droughts and floods** on women and support the active participation of women in the identification and implementation of solutions to climate change.
8. **Build on the present survey to continue strengthening the quality and availability of gender-related data.** While internet connectivity remains a challenge, data collection could draw on the relatively wide availability of mobile phones in urban areas.

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