1. Introduction

In the recent post-famine years, national and global forces and priorities have altered the space for social protection in Somalia, creating both new constraints and new opportunities. The Syrian refugee crisis has reduced donors’ fiscal space for engaging in protracted crises. With limited discernible progress on entrenched poverty, vulnerability, and climate-related insecurity in Somalia, major donors are pushing for a change from ‘business as usual’ and questioning the value-added of the UN and international NGOs. The government of Somalia is increasingly asserting its role in setting the policy direction for national and local development, though its legitimacy and sphere of influence remain constrained.

Specific to social protection, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have recognised the role of social protection in reducing poverty and vulnerability, and emphasised the need for increased coverage of national social protection systems. The past year has seen conversations about the role of shock-responsive social protection and programmes to bridge the ‘humanitarian-development divide’ gain momentum. This lens has particular resonance in the Somalia context, where conflict and exposure to climactic shocks have converged with systematic discrimination and marginalization of some populations to contribute to a poverty rate of 51 percent and among the highest levels of income inequality in the region.

UNICEF Somalia is well-placed to provide technical leadership on social protection, as one of the few organizations in Somalia with dedicated social protection expertise. UNICEF’s work straddles humanitarian and development programming. UNICEF is among the global lead organizations which are defining a path forward for social protection in fragile and conflict-affected states. UNICEF has also been a global advocate for equity-based programming, focusing on access to opportunity for poor and excluded children and youth. Somalia’s fast-growing urban population and high rates of exclusion among vulnerable urban populations (including, inter alia, displaced populations which have settled in urban areas) provide a key access point for social protection programming which can be tested and subsequently rolled out at national scale.

As such, the establishment of strong functional government systems able to manage and deliver evidence-based long-term child-sensitive social protection programming is the focus for Somalia. In support of this, UNICEF Somalia made the decision to delink short-term cash transfer programming from social protection. While a significant amount of cash transfers were delivered following the 2011 famine period, funding was only secured for short-term support and did not carry forward into the long-term predictable transfers required for social protection.

In this context, UNICEF Somalia will focus its social protection programming in the new Country Programme on two areas: (i) foundational social protection systems; and (ii) social and economic inclusion of children and youth in urban areas. The approach to addressing these areas will incorporate a focus on: (i) evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy; (ii) partnerships and cross-sectoral linkages; and (iii) technical capacity development. Primary partners in these efforts will be ministerial counterparts in the federal and state governments and Somaliland, in addition to development partners, United Nations agencies, and to a lesser
extent, international and local NGO partners. To a significant extent, social protection outcomes in the latter years of the CPD will depend upon the success of earlier efforts, including fundraising and the success of advocacy and capacity strengthening activities.

2. Prioritised issues and areas

In the next Country Programme, the social protection portfolio will re-focus, taking into account both core vulnerabilities of children in Somalia and realities of the operating environment. These include, inter alia, limited resources (financial and human), minimal donor investment in development-oriented social protection programming, little technical expertise in social protection on the part of key partners, and persistent security and access constraints. The way forward proposed in this strategy note also builds upon lessons from the post-famine years in Somalia, where a project-based focus on the manifestations of household and community level vulnerability (e.g., poor nutrition and health status, deployment of harmful coping strategies) has largely failed to address the underlying factors – political, social, and economic – which keep households in a repeated cycle of risk and exclusion. The core thematic areas are described in additional detail in the subsequent paragraphs.

Core Focus Areas

(i) Foundational social protection systems

Somalia has a strong tradition of religious-, family- or clan-based social support, including reciprocal support between neighbours, donations of cash or goods to poor or vulnerable households, and some forms of micro-insurance. However, these traditional support systems have become fatigued and are increasingly more difficult to sustain, as the poorest households are in need of support year after year. As a result, households often resort to harmful coping strategies, such as forgoing essential medical care, removing children from school prematurely or selling productive assets. Chronically poor and vulnerable households are most at risk of exposure to shocks, and are least equipped to mitigate and overcome shocks and stresses, but traditional support systems are not well-equipped to meet their needs. Traditional systems may also exclude members of minority clans or other marginalised groups.

There are currently no formal, government led social protection systems in place in Somalia. Development partners provide the bulk of humanitarian and development support in Somalia, including through programmes that serve as a basic, though porous, safety net. Coverage provided under these programmes is very low relative to need, and is largely short-term and unpredictable, with a focus primarily on protecting consumption during lean seasons. Government-sponsored safety nets exist, but with extremely low coverage and minimal impact.

The basic elements of a scalable social protection system, including a social protection policy, management information systems, targeting and identification systems, and grievance redressal mechanisms, are not yet in place in Somalia. This greatly hampers the ability of the government or development partners to identify coverage gaps and exclusion errors or to monitor impact. Furthermore, it perpetuates a focus on expensive and inefficient humanitarian interventions to address systemic needs, and prevents the rapid scale-up of safety net programmes during times of actual humanitarian need.

The implementation modalities under this focus area are technical capacity development and partnerships and cross-sectoral linkages.

(ii) Social and economic inclusion of children and youth in urban areas

Somalia’s population is estimated at 12.3 million, and nearly half of the population is under the age of 15.\(^2\) Households are generally large, with an average household size of 5.3, and an average of over 6 members for households in the bottom three consumption quintiles.\(^3\) Somalia is experiencing rapid rates of urbanization, estimated at 3.4 percent per annum. In Somaliland, one-third of the population is estimated to be living in urban areas; this figure is expected to increase to over half of the population by 2050.\(^4\) This is a result in part of displacement, which has arisen from years of conflict and a subsequent ‘drop-out’ from nomadic pastoralism. Currently, it is estimated that 1.2 million people are displaced across the country, though a large percentage of this population has indicated that they do not intend to return to their places of origin and may thus be more accurately considered urban poor.

Both rural areas and urban informal settlements face a chronic lack of access to essential services, including health, education and water and sanitation. Almost all health services are private and very few people can afford to pay. Free health services are largely provided by the international community, including UNICEF. Recent data from the World Bank’s High Frequency Surveys in Somaliland, Puntland, and Benadir have emphasised the role of location in poverty and deprivation in the country.\(^5\) Poverty is deeper in rural areas of both Somaliland and Benadir, and highest among IDP populations, but the largest share of the poor population is in urban areas. Multiple deprivations are common, particularly for women and girls, and there is a clear correlation between income poverty and reduced access to education and health services, clean water, and improved sanitation.

The social protection response in this focus area will emphasise evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy to improve the understanding of social and economic deprivations facing children and youth, emphasizing partnerships and cross-sectoral linkages to develop effective responses.

3. Theory of Change

The UNICEF Social Protection strategy in the next country programme will contribute to an environment in which, by 2020, more children receive assistance through pilot social protection programmes which are designed to enable all children to fully participate in the social and economic development of the nation and reach their full potential. The social inclusion of marginalised groups, including women and minority clans, will be a central feature of this strategy, as will a focus on partnerships and cross-sectoral interventions. The design of the social protection component of the Country Programme is based on the assumption that if government officials and development partners understand the central role of social protection in reducing poverty and vulnerability and if well-designed and coordinated social protection systems are developed and put in place, then the government and development partners will be able to develop and initiate predictable and consistent social protection support to vulnerable children and youth.

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The below underlines the theory of change for the UNICEF Somalia social protection programme.

**Rationale**

Formal social protection systems do not exist in Somalia. The establishment of effective and scalable social protection systems within government will enable the achievement of positive impacts for vulnerable groups, including in the building of resilience and poverty reduction.

It is well established that social protection systems are able to effectively address impacts of conflict, climactic shocks, and household-level shocks which disproportionately impact individuals and groups who are subject to social exclusion, including minority clans, through providing long-term predictable support.

Since the 2011 famine, development and humanitarian actors in Somalia have implemented short-term social safety net programmes predominantly focused on covariate shocks such as conflict-related displacement and drought. These programmes are unable to reach many of those subject to exclusion, or, due to their short-term nature, achieve significant long-term impacts. They often use geographical selection mechanisms, complemented by some form of poverty-based targeting. These targeting methods often insufficiently address the underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability, such as social and economic exclusion of women and minority clans, which place households at higher risk of being impacted by a shock, aggravate the impacts of shocks, and limit the number and strength of coping mechanisms. They therefore do not fill the social protection void left by the absence of a state managed system.

**External Support Factors**

Declining humanitarian funding in Somalia will increasingly push development partners towards interventions which address systemic issues which lead to persistent poverty, vulnerability, and risk exposure, rather than short-term programs which are unable to address the underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability.

UNICEF Somalia has seen a gradual decline in humanitarian funding since the end of the famine period, with sharp declines in funding for social safety net programmes, such as humanitarian cash transfers, starting in 2014. Reduced funding for short-term humanitarian cash transfer responses will incentivise partners working in the sphere of social protection to transition towards longer-term programming with a stronger value-for-money focus and more clear impacts on prevention and risk mitigation.

**Entry Points**

The strongest entry point for social protection in Somalia will be found in equal opportunities for children and youth. Development partners in Somalia are increasingly using the language of ‘graduation’ and promotional activities to push for clear exit strategies from social protection. Though part of this push stems from declines in funding and a failure to recognise provision of social protection as among the core functions of the state, it also reflects commonly held notions of social protection’s role in creating dependency. Though UNICEF will continue to combat misperceptions of the impacts of social protection, discussions of the equality of opportunity for children and youth, rather than equality of outcomes for adults, are likely to garner the most support from development partners for social protection in Somalia.
With reference to the overall strategic vision for social protection, and guided by the underlying rationale, UNICEF Somalia will focus on two outputs in the next country programme.

**Outcome: By 2020, more children receive assistance through pilot social-protection programmes designed to enable all children to fully participate in the social and economic development of the nation and reach their full potential.**

**Output 1:** Improved policies, processes, coordination mechanisms, and capacities are in place to support the basic social protection system through which government-owned and managed social protection programmes will be delivered post-2020.

This output will support the development of effective, efficient, and scalable social protection responses in Somalia by laying the foundation for social protection systems, processes, and policy. This output is expected to support the push for greater political and fiscal space for social protection, and to reposition social protection as a core function of the state. UNICEF Somalia sees the development of a basic social protection system as a precursor to efforts to improve the coverage of social protection programmes and to increase the government allocation for social protection as a percentage of both government budget and GDP. Government-led social protection programmes – including cash transfers, pensions, social insurance and related response – are unlikely to be developed during the CPD period, but the social protection system will be designed to effectively manage a diverse array of potential future programmes.

In order to ensure a fully functional and government-owned social protection system, UNICEF Somalia will implement an approach focused on technical capacity strengthening and partnerships and cross-sectoral linkages.

**Technical capacity development:** UNICEF will lead the technical engagement with the government of Somalia to develop a social protection policy to guide the prioritization and implementation of social protection interventions. The social protection policy is among the key milestones in the National Development Plan for Somalia (2017-19) and is also a milestone of the Somaliland Social Protection Technical Steering Committee. This policy will be developed through extensive consultations with federal member states, relevant ministries, and development partners (including CSOs) to ensure buy-in and relevance. Building upon the development of the social protection policy, in the latter years of the CPD, UNICEF Somalia will support the development of administrative systems for scalable social protection. Such systems will include, *inter alia*, a national registry, management information systems, and grievance redressals procedures. Support will be provided primarily by the USSC-based Social Protection Specialist, with the support of ministry-based technical assistance provided through consultancies. Partnerships with other social protection technical organizations, such as the World Bank and the World Food Programme, will be essential for realization of this outcome.

**Partnerships and cross-sectoral linkages:** UNICEF will continue its leadership of the social protection working group under the government’s formal aid coordination structure, which is currently being revised, as well as the Somaliland Technical Steering Committee for social protection. These formal coordination structures enable UNICEF to take a central role in forming the debate on social protection, by supporting the government in its annual programme planning and budgeting exercises. Additionally, UNICEF will expand its partnerships with
civil society, IFIs, and donors through social protection training and coordination activities such as the informal social protection donor group and the UN-NGO social protection forum. These fora also provide a natural sounding board and opportunity for partnership for UNICEF’s capacity development activities. Finally, UNICEF will seek to strengthen analytical and technical partnerships with other leading social protection-focused organizations, such as the World Bank, DFID, and ECHO, to build coherent joint positions and strategies for social protection.

**Output 2: Knowledge and capacity of government and partners is increased to identify and respond to social and economic inclusion dimensions for urban children and youth in social protection and development programmes.**

This output will address multi-dimensional poverty, exclusion, and deprivation faced by children and youth in urban areas, bringing these issues to the attention of government and development partners and ensuring that the role of social protection in facilitating inclusion and opportunity is valued and leveraged. The Output will link closely with the work being undertaken by the UNICEF Somalia Social Policy team on topics such as child-friendly budgeting, as well as the efforts of UNICEF’s sector and emergency teams to understand and overcome barriers to children’s access to core social services. UNICEF’s approach in this area will focus on evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy and partnerships and cross-sectoral linkages.

**Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy:** UNICEF will focus heavily on research and advocacy in the first half of the country programme. Building on the recent UNICEF-World Bank global flagship report on child poverty, UNICEF Somalia will aim to enhance the ‘poverty story’ for Somalia by integrating a child-focused lens and strengthening the focus on multiple deprivations. UNICEF will also advocate for development of social protection interventions which can help to overcome the exclusion of children from access to services, building on the work done to date in Somaliland. Specifically, the following research products are expected to be developed within the first two years of the country programme:

- Annual Somalia-specific companion pieces(updates to the recent UNICEF-World Bank joint publication on *Ending Extreme Poverty: A Focus on Children*).
- Social Network Analysis examining the ways in which clan and community relationships impact the likelihood to benefit from cash transfers and other household-level humanitarian and development interventions.
- Comparative research on the impact of different benefit levels on household-level coping strategies and well-being indicators.
- Analysis of the cost of a scalable social protection programme targeting children, coupled with projections of the impact of social protection on monetary poverty.
- Diagnosis of the humanitarian caseload from a social protection perspective, examining whether this caseload is consistent year to year or subject to change, and what features are most closely associated with vulnerability to humanitarian needs and risks.

**Partnerships and cross-sectoral linkages:** UNICEF Somalia will continue to lead thinking on ‘humanitarian-to-development bridging programmes’, partnering with the Emergency section to forge linkages between social protection and emergency activities, with a particular focus on the part of the IDP caseload which can be understood as urban poor.

Analytical engagement with other sectors will also be a focus during the CPD time period. However, given that it is highly unlikely that social protection interventions such as a cash
transfer will be in place during the CPD period, there will likely not be specific programmatic links to other sectors during this time.

Strategic partnerships outside of UNICEF will build on engagements with partners such as the Government of Somalia, the World Bank, NGO partners, donors, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and others around innovative financing mechanisms (including Islamic financing), public private partnerships, and linkages in system building.

4. Results Structure and Framework

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<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td>By 2020, more children receive assistance through pilot social-protection programmes designed to enable all children to fully participate in the social and economic development of the nation and reach their full potential.</td>
<td>Policy drafted and adopted by government; government management structure for social protection established; implementation plan for social protection programmes formed, prioritizing children and inclusive of minorities and women.</td>
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<td>Basic new social protection system is in place, and incorporates equity and inclusion dimensions focusing on urban youth</td>
<td>Social Protection policy is in place; Regular government led coordination of social protection plans and activities</td>
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<td><strong>OutputS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improved policies, processes, coordination mechanisms, and capacities are in place to support the basic social protection system through which government-owned and managed social protection programs will be delivered post-2020.</td>
<td>Social Protection policy drafted and endorsed by government; Government led Social Protection working groups meet at least quarterly</td>
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<td>Social Protection policy is in place; Regular government led coordination of social protection plans and activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Knowledge and capacity of government and partners is increased to identify and respond to social and economic inclusion dimensions for urban children and youth in social protection and development programmes.</td>
<td>Data on factors impacting urban children and youth access to services is incorporated into SP policy and programme design</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data on factors impacting urban children and youth access to services is incorporated into SP policy and programme design</td>
<td>Number of research pieces relating urban children and youth referenced by SP policy and programmes</td>
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5. Resource Requirements

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<th>Programme budget</th>
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<td>Regular resources</td>
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UNICEF Somalia will undertake advocacy and fundraising for Social Protection activities throughout 2017, building on its current partnership with the Italian Cooperation and WFP. The Social Protection resource mobilization approach will focus on a mix of Social Protection technical partners who may become funding partners (e.g., DFID, European Commission, World Bank) and non-traditional Social Protection partners (e.g., Gulf States, Turkish Cooperation).

6. Monitoring outputs and demonstrating UNICEF’s contribution to outcomes

In the first two years of the Social Protection programme under the CPD, monitoring will focus on the review of outputs delivered under the programme. This will include, *inter alia*, technical review of social protection policies, review of administrative systems developed through UNICEF support, trip reports from coordination forums, and a measure of the success of fundraising efforts as an indicator of the effectiveness of advocacy. This data will be collected on a quarterly basis, measured against specific output indicators in the annual work plans.
Annex 1: Theory of Change

By 2020, new basic social protection systems are instituted, which are designed to enable all children to fully participate in the social and economic development of the nation and reach their full potential.

Improved policies, processes, coordination mechanisms, and capacities are in place to support the basic social protection system through which government-owned and managed social protection programs will be delivered post-2020.

Knowledge and capacity of government and partners is increased to identify and respond to social and economic inclusion dimensions for urban children and youth in social protection and development programs.

- A technically-sound social protection policy is developed and endorsed by government
- Administrative systems for scalable social protection are in place

SP coordination forums with government, CSOs, and development partners ensure the mainstreaming of SP into relevant sectoral programs

- Appropriate social protection interventions to address social and economic exclusion of children and youth are designed, costed, and integrated within relevant sectoral programs
- Government and development partners understand the factors underlying social and economic exclusion of children and youth, and how social protection can overcome this exclusion
- Information on the selection of beneficiaries for development and humanitarian benefits in urban areas is available and widely distributed

Risks:
- Conflict
- Inaccess
- Funding
- Constraints
Annex 2: Results Structure

By 2020, new basic social protection systems are instituted, which are designed to enable all children to fully participate in the social and economic development of the nation and reach their full potential.

Indicator: Basic social protection system is in place, and incorporate equity and inclusion dimensions focusing on urban youth.

Output 1: Improved policies, processes, coordination mechanisms, and capacities are in place to support the basic social protection system through which government-owned and managed social protection programs will be delivered post-2020.

Indicator: Social Protection policy is in place
Indicator: Regular government led coordination of social protection plans and activities

Output 2: Knowledge and capacity of government and partners is increased to identify and respond to social and economic inclusion dimensions for urban children and youth in social protection and development programmes.

Indicator: Data on factors impacting urban children and youth access to services is incorporated into SP policy and program design

INPUTS: Staff, Consultants/TA, Financial Resources