

Project Title: Phase 1 of support to Local Democratic Practices  
in Somalia – Local Elections in Somaliland

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Final Report of the European Union/GTZ  
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## **1. Introduction and Objectives**

### **1.1 Introduction:**

The project *Phase I of support to Local Democratic Practices in Somalia – Local Elections in Somaliland*, ('the Project') ran from 17<sup>th</sup> October 2002, when the Technical Advisor Team ('TAM') arrived in Nairobi, to the end of December 2002.

Financed principally by the European Commission, the project also benefited from further support from Denmark, the United Kingdom, Holland, Switzerland, and Finland.

The implementing agency was Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, through the GTZ International Services East and Central Africa Regional Office in Nairobi ('GTZ-IS').

The TAM consisted of Manfred Gers, Chief Technical Advisor ('CTA') and Nicholas M. Valentine-Selsey, Logistics and Financial Advisor ('LFA')<sup>1</sup>. The TAM was assisted by Elim Svedjemo, a social anthropologist with a special interest in Somaliland, and supported by a small local staff. Based in Hargeisa, the TAM travelled to other towns in Somaliland as necessary, although sometimes constrained by local security conditions.

The donors' budget was Euro 865,344. Final donor commitments totalled approximately Euro 775,000, as follows:

EC	Euro 450,000
Denmark	Euro 150,000
UK	£ 60,000 (approximately Euro 90,000)
Netherlands	Euro 65,000
Switzerland	Euro 50,000
Finland	Euro 10,000

Unlike first democratic elections in many countries, in Somaliland the National Electoral Commission ('NEC') did not benefit from overwhelming technical or financial support. Thus the Local Council elections of 15<sup>th</sup> December 2002 were very much a Somaliland affair, run by Somalilanders for Somalilanders. This more than outweighed any technical weaknesses in the electoral process that arose as a result of inexperience.

### **1.2 Political background and objectives:**

The political background and objectives of the project are set out in detail in Annex A, *Project Document (abbreviated)*.

The Overall Objective was "*to increase democratisation of the society in North West Somalia, leading to good governance and to sustainable development*".

The Project Purpose was that "*the local authorities within North West Somalia are elected in acceptable elections, according to international standards*".

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Valentine-Selsey was contracted by the Bureau for Institutional Reform and Democracy

## **2. Executive Summary.**

2.1 The Project Purpose was achieved. The Local Council elections that took place on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2002 were the first democratic elections to take place in Somaliland. 453,903 voters cast their ballots in well managed, peaceful, and orderly elections, choosing 332 Local Councillors, each of whom was proposed by a national political organisation. This is a major step away from clan-dominated politics.

2.2 That these elections were successful is largely due to the timely support from the international donor community, led by the European Commission, represented in Somaliland by a two-man Technical Advisor Mission.

2.3 To capitalise on the success of these elections, Somaliland will greatly benefit from further support, in particular:

- in financial and technical support for the Presidential election
- in training for newly-elected councillors

2.4 The achievements, hopes and fears of the NEC are summed up in the Communique of 16<sup>th</sup> December 2002 from the Chairman of the NEC, Ahmed Haji Ali Adami, attached in Annex B.

## **3. Preparations for Local Council Elections at October 2002**

### **3.1 Legal Background**

The principal legal instruments relevant to the project are:

- Revised Constitution of the Republic of Somaliland (adopted on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2001, following a national referendum)
- Law of Elections of the Presidency and District Councils (Law 20/2001) ('Electoral Law')
- Citizenship Law (Law 22/2002)
- Regulation of Political Associations & Parties Law (as amended) Law14/2000 ('Political Parties Regulations')

The relevance of these laws on the Project is discussed in the annex to *The Project Document, abbreviated (annex)*, in Annex A. The complete documents can be found on the Internet, for example on [www.somalilandforum.com](http://www.somalilandforum.com). The unofficial translation of these laws is by Ibrahim Hashi Jama LL.B, LL.M., to whom the TAM is much indebted.

There are 23 Districts in Somaliland, and 379 District Councillors were to be elected to replace their government-appointed predecessors. The number of councillors per district depends on the estimated population: a full breakdown is in Annex C. The mayor of each district is subsequently elected by the councillors.

### 3.2 The National Electoral Commission.

The NEC is the body charged with management of elections (Electoral Law, art. 11). Its seven members are selected to reflect the political and social makeup of Somaliland. The current members of the NEC are listed in Annex D. The Chairman, elected from within the NEC, holds office for six months, the current Chairman's tenure expiring in late January 2003.

By October 2002, the NEC had set up their national organisation, devised their Civic Education strategy, taken delivery of most of the non-sensitive electoral materials and had started regular discussions with the political organisations. Their detailed preparations for the Local Council elections are discussed further in paragraph 8.

### 3.3 Political Organisations.

Before the Local council Elections there were six officially recognised political organisations (see Annex A – *Project Document, abbreviated*). As specified in the Political Parties Regulations, only three political organisations would emerge from the Local Council elections as recognised political parties, based on their national vote. This is a major step towards building up national-based politics, replacing the clan-based politics that have bedevilled Somalia. Relationships between the NEC and the political organisations are discussed further in paragraph 5.

## 4. Local Council Elections – Outcome

The results of the District Council elections by region are set out in Annex E. The following summary highlights the national picture:

### 4.1 Votes won, by political organisation:

<u>Political Organisation</u>	<u>Hargeisa</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Awdal</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Sahil</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Togdheer</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Sool</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Sanaag</u>	<u>%</u>
UDUB	70,989	38	58,939	58	13,502	50	18,330	28	1,055	17	16,574	31
KULMIYE	29,923	16	13,679	14	5,309	19	17,476	26	3,070	49	13,701	26
UCID	30,676	16	7,422	7	2,900	11	4,821	7	224	4	3,401	6
SAHAN	14,748	8	4,499	4	2,054	8	15,234	23	51	1	11,356	21
HORMOOD	29,104	16	7,229	8	1,188	4	1,454	2	154	2	1,409	3
ASAD	10,943	6	8,727	9	2,281	8	9,283	14	1,707	27	6,655	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>186,383</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100,495</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27,234</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>66,598</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6,261</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53,096</b>	<b>100</b>

<u>Political Organisation</u>	<u>Votes cast nationally</u>	<u>%</u>
UDUB	179,389	40.8
KULMIYE	83,158	18.9
UCID	49,444	11.2
SAHAN	47,942	10.9
HORMOOD	40,538	9.2
ASAD	39,596	9.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>440,067</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The three political organisations with the most votes nationally – UDUB, KULMIYE and UCID – have emerged from the Local Council elections to be recognised as national political parties, under the provisions of the Political Parties Regulations. However, no party gained at least 20% of the valid votes cast in each region, which was the primary intention of the Political Parties Regulations, and UCID was in single figures in some regions.

These three parties are now entitled to contend the Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Councillors standing on lists of the other three political organisations – 118 in total – must now join one of these three.

#### 4.2 Local Council seats won nationally, by political organisation:

<b>Political Organisation</b>	<b>Seats gained nationally</b>	<b>%</b>
UDUB	36	27
KULMIYE	67	18
UCID	45	12
SAHAN	28	7
HORMOOD	37	10
ASAD	53	14
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>88</b>
Seats not contested (see Notes)	47	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100</b>

Notes: (1) nationally there are 379 local councilors. However, in two districts in Sool Region (Las Anood, 21 seats: Taleex, 13 seats) voting was postponed due to local security conditions. Elections in these districts will take place at a later date. Voting was also postponed in 16 Polling Stations in Buhoodle District (Togdheer Region).

(2) in each of three districts (Hudun, in Sool Region: Badhan, Dhahar, both in Sanaag Region) there was only one list of candidates, so no elections took place. The seats have been allocated to the relevant political organizations.

(3) in Laskorey (Sanaag Region; 13 seats), no political organisation put forward a candidates' list.

#### 4.3 Votes cast:

	<b>Votes cast</b>	<b>%</b>
Non-valid votes	440,067	96.95%
Valid votes cast	13,836	3.05
Total votes cast	453,903	100.00%

At 3.05%, the level of non-valid votes is exceptionally low for a first election. This reflects a degree of voter education by the NEC, but it is also due in part to the 'user-friendly' nature of many Polling Stations (see paragraph 9 below). The NEC acknowledges that more voter education will be required before the Presidential election.

## **5. The NEC and the Political Organisations**

The NEC held extensive discussions with the political organisations throughout the electoral period. The formal outcome of these discussions, generally facilitated by the Academy for Peace and Development, was two Codes of Conduct. One specifies guidelines on relationships between the political organisations and the other on relationships between the political organisations and the NEC. Copies of both documents are in Annexes F and G respectively.

The essence of both documents is recognition of the primacy of the law, and recognition of the need for continuing discussion and consultation, in the interests of peace and democracy.

It is clear that the NEC did achieve the respect and cooperation of the political organisations. One illustration of this came when candidates' lists were being submitted. According to the Electoral Law (art 23), all disputes regarding candidates' lists should be sorted out by the political organisations. In reality, different factions within each organisation came to the NEC for advice and rulings, regarding the NEC as the neutral arbiter. By taking on this role, the NEC maintained a degree of stability within each political organisation and maintained the momentum of the electoral process. However, this is not a long-term solution. As the political parties develop, they will need to build their own democratic mechanisms for selecting candidates.

## **6. Local Council Elections – activities of the TAM**

### **6.1 Scope of work.**

The Project Document rightly identified a critical weakness of the NEC – its very limited knowledge of the electoral process. The primary task of the TAM, therefore, was to assist and support the NEC in all election-related matters.

As foreseen in the Project Document, the TAM was closely involved in all phases of the electoral process, including operational management, registration of voters, training, civic and voter education, document drafting, support to domestic observer groups, procurement, transportation and assembly of materials, communications, finance and collation and announcement of the results.

A selection of briefing documents, covering a wide range of subjects, provided by the TAM to the NEC is attached, in Annex H. However, two areas are of particular importance to future elections.



## 6.2 Operational management.

At its headquarters in Hargeisa, the NEC only has an Executive Director and an accountant to provide operational support and management. This lack of support was identified early by the TAM, which suggested to the NEC that a team of local managers be recruited, on a temporary basis, to implement the decisions of the NEC. This would leave its members more time to concentrate on strategic problems and on discussions with political parties.

How the operational team was used highlighted an interesting aspect of Somaliland culture. Whatever the ideas of the TAM, while the operational team could make preparations and plans, and they could sometimes implement NEC decisions, they had no delegated authority. The members of the NEC made all decisions, and they – as the heads of the electoral process – took calls from anyone on any electoral matter, even if it was the chair of a Polling Station on voting day asking for some water. This had a marked effect on the efficiency of the individual Commissioners over the voting period, as demands on their time increased and their rest periods decreased.

## 6.3 Operations Centre.

Initially there were no preparations for reliable communications between the NEC, the Regional Electoral Officers ('REOs'), and District Electoral Officers ('DEOs'). At the suggestion of the TAM, the NEC set up a communications network which linked the NEC with all REOs and all DEOs, and with the majority of Polling Centres as well, using landlines, fax lines and radio. The focal point of this was an Operations Centre, upon which communications were centred and from which the NEC could hold press conferences and specific and general briefings, particularly over the voting and counting period. The donors financed the communications network and the Operations Centre.

Again, there was an element of cultural dissonance between the TAM and the NEC. The idea of the TAM, based on previous experience in other countries, was that members of the NEC would be in the Operations Centre on a shift basis throughout the voting period, reacting to problems throughout the country as they arose. In fact, members of the NEC operated from regional capitals over the voting and counting period, so the TAM's concept was not exercised in full. However, the Operations Centre did fulfil its primary functions – to act a focus for communications within the NEC's national organisation and to act as a focus for briefings. At the time of the Presidential election, when the whole of Somaliland will be a single constituency, it will be more important to have a single, established, focal point for communications.

## 6.4 Impact of the TAM.

The main credit for the success of the Local Council elections belongs to the members of the NEC and to their staff throughout Somaliland.

However, if it had not been for the TAM, as representatives of the international donors supporting these elections, the NEC would not have had the critical financial support, the technical advice, nor the management tools with which to fulfil their task.

## **7. Local Council Elections – Registration of Voters**

Eligibility to vote is based on age (over sixteen years) and on nationality (as laid down in the Citizenship Law). In the absence (for the large majority) of any documentation, age and citizenship were based on a personal statement from the potential voter, corroborated by a local Elder or responsible person.

The initial intention of the NEC and of the donors had been to register potential voters as early in 2002 as possible, thus leaving time for consolidated, computerised voters lists to be produced. Apart from being the key planning tool for the election, these lists could also be developed into the beginnings of a national database.

A number of factors meant that this would not be possible. Although they had planned to hold registration in October, the NEC's final decision on timing was complicated by discussions with political organisations to ensure that they would support the process and by discussions on how and where to carry out registration. In the end, registration was limited to the main towns of each region with registration teams including appropriate persons to verify the nationality and age of those wishing to register. Briefing notes on registration, prepared for the NEC by the TAM, are in Annex H. A specimen of a Voter Registration Card is in Annex I.

Regrettably, registration was not a success. The NEC has not yet published the numbers of those registered, but apocryphal evidence indicates that it may have been in the region of 350,000 to 400,000. In large parts of the country, there was no registration at all. The way in which voters were registered made it very difficult for District voters' lists to be compiled or for the information to be displayed for public examination.

When it came to voting, people were allowed to vote whether or not they had been registered, indelible voters' ink being used as the defence against multiple voting. Under the circumstances, this was the only feasible solution.

When members of the TAM discussed the weakness of registration with the NEC, we were assured that this was not expected to be a problem, as:

- (a) local knowledge of individuals would ensure that inappropriate people did not vote, and
- (b) formal registration, requiring voters to attend a particular Polling Station, would be seen to be discriminating against nomads.

Given the current development of Somaliland society, this is perhaps true. However, in the longer term a more formal approach will be required, as urbanisation increases, as

society becomes more flexible, and as minorities develop whose rights need more formal protection than is offered by the traditional clan system.

In the absence of up to date figures, the NEC used the information from the 2001 Referendum (approximately 1.18 million votes cast) as the basis for planning. This turned out to be a reasonable guide to distribution of population.

## **8. Local Council Elections – NEC Preparations**

### **8.1 NEC organisation.**

The NEC follows the national administrative structure, having six REOs and twenty-three DEOs, with a head office in Hargeisa. While the NEC is a permanent institution, the REOs and DEOs are only brought into being when needed at elections.

The NEC Commissioners are supported at their central office in Hargeisa by an Executive Director and an accountant, as well as a number of secretaries, drivers, guards, etc.

The Executive Director and the accountant provided the only operational support available to the NEC. The TAM recognised that this was a serious weakness, and that more support would be needed. Eventually the NEC agreed, and a team of managers was recruited – financed by the donors -- covering operations, communications, logistics, and IT and technical support. Had it not been for the presence of these managers, the Local Council elections would not have been a success. For the Presidential elections to be operationally successful, the NEC will need to reinstate this level of operational management.

### **8.2 Recruitment and training of staff**

The NEC selected the REOs and DEOs, who then recruited their support staff.

At REO and DEO levels, the NEC had 156 staff. In late October, they were trained by the NEC in their responsibilities and duties, following programmes devised by the TAM. On the basis of their names, it appears that seven of the 156 were women.

When voter registration was introduced in the main towns, the REOs and DEOs recruited and trained approximately 460 staff.

For the voting period, the REOs and DEOs selected and trained 3,200 Polling Station staff.

The outcome of the Local Council elections showed that, overall the NEC staff performed well, and carried out their duties honourably and effectively. However, it is clear from the registration process and from the comments of international and domestic

observers that more training will be required before the Presidential election. This will need to concentrate on the basic mechanics of how to manage Polling Stations.

### 8.3 Security

The NEC made the necessary arrangements with the Ministry of the Interior for police support over the electoral period, the latter providing about 2,500 officers in total. This included a police presence at NEC offices throughout the country, escorts for the reception, storage, and delivery of sensitive electoral materials, security cover at Polling Stations and escorts for the transport of the results.

Prior to 15<sup>th</sup> December, the NEC had postponed elections in two districts in Sool Region (Las Anood, 21 seats; Taleex, 13 seats). This was largely due to incursions from Puntland, rather than to internal problems. Elections in these districts will take place at a later date.

Voting did not take place in 16 Polling Stations in Buhoodle District (Togdheer Region), along the Somaliland/Ethiopia border.

### 8.4 Finance.

The NEC managed three separate budgets for these elections, one for the long-term funding of the NEC itself, one for the funding of the REOs and DEOs (to cover at least the Local Council and Presidential elections) and the third for the costs of the Local Council elections. The latter two amounted to SomSh 4.8 billion (about Euro 765,000), but excluded some costs (e.g. indelible voters' ink) and understated others (e.g. security, transport, communications).

Although the TAM was not involved in discussions between the NEC, the Presidency and various Ministries (in particular the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Interior), it is clear that necessary funds were found. To assist the NEC's cash flow, the Project made short term advances totalling about Euros 90,000: all of these were repaid on time or accounted for by acceptable receipts.

Financial management was one of the NEC's weaker areas. There is no suggestion whatsoever of any impropriety, indeed the NEC brought in an external auditor to review their accounts: it is just that the financial systems used by government (and therefore by the NEC) were not designed for a fast-moving, high-spending process like an election. That said, the NEC provided acceptable receipts from the vast majority of the end-recipients reimbursement was sought for staff per diems for training, registration and for polling.

The NEC and its Executive Director recognised this weakness, and were open to suggestions and assistance from the TAM. Unfortunately, there was little that the TAM could do in the time available, particularly as there was also an election to manage. If possible, the NEC will need to introduce a more flexible, spreadsheet-based system before the Presidential election.

As started in paragraph 1.1, the initial donors' budget was Euro 865,344 and final donor commitments totalled approximately Euro 775,000. However, the Project only disbursed approximately Euros 620,000 (to be confirmed in the GTZ Financial Report). This was principally due to difficulties the TAM encountered in balancing the spending needs of the NEC against the financial procedures required by the donors. Disbursement of donor funds was under the control of the TAM, and was generally on a reimbursement basis.

## **9. Local Council Elections -- Voting and Counting**

### 9.1 Number of voters

During the referendum, it is reported that 1.18 million votes were cast, a figure never fully substantiated.

The table below compares reported voting figures in 2001 and 2002, by region. The guesstimates for the number of eligible electors casting their votes in 2002 range from about 50% (COSONGO/NAGAAD report) to about 70% (NEC in private conversations with the TAM). Taking account of nomads who were not near Polling Stations, of those who were not, interested in/did not understand Local Council elections and of those who were unable to vote, then **perhaps** an **estimated** 60% of those eligible cast their votes. This might indicate 750,000 potential voters.

The NEC is working on a budget figure 800,0000 voters for 2003, to which will be added a 25% reserve for planning and for the purchase of ballot papers and indelible voters' ink. In passing, although the Electoral Law allows for voting overseas in the Presidential election, it is unlikely that the NEC will do this in 2003, for logistic and financial reasons.

<b>Region</b>	<b>2001 Referendum: valid votes cast</b>	<b>2002 Local elections: valid votes cast</b>	<b>Variation</b>
Awdal	180,473	100,495	79,978
Hargeisa	402,558	186,383	216,175
Sahil	110,406	27,234	83,172
Togdheer	224,159	66,598	157,561
Sanaag	162,078	53,096	108,982
Sool	103,185	6,261	96,924
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>1,182,859</b>	<b>440,067</b>	<b>742,792</b>

### 9.2 Voting.

On the basis of available information from the NEC, from domestic observers and from the few international observers, the voting went remarkably smoothly on 15<sup>th</sup> December, all the more so as this was the first democratic election in Somaliland:

- while voting had been postponed before 15<sup>th</sup> December in two districts in Sool Region (Las Anood and Taleex) and in sixteen Polling Stations in Buhoodle (Toghdeer Region) for local security reasons, no security problems were reported anywhere else;
- there were no reports of significant delays to opening Polling Stations;
- there were adequate supplies of voting materials, either in the Polling Stations or in District or Regional reserves;
- the queues of voters were patient and well-behaved;
- domestic observers were present in about 400 of the 712 Polling Stations;
- political party agents (who received no financial support) were reported to be present in most Polling Stations, certainly in the towns.

There were, however, some problems:

- it was sometimes possible to see the voter's mark through the back of the folded ballot papers (see samples of the ballot paper in Annex N);
- there was some anxiety as to the effectiveness of the indelible voters' stain. Even if it did stay on the skin, there was a belief that it could be removed by some (unspecified) solvents or could be masked by henna; this was never proved;
- in many Polling Stations police or soldiers took over crowd control duties inside the station, contrary to the letter of the Electoral Law;
- in some Polling Stations domestic observers or political organisation agents participated in the running of the process;
- due to a lack of light, some Polling Stations closed early or while voters were still waiting, to allow counting to take place in daylight.

More importantly, in many Polling Stations the principle of the secrecy of the vote was not respected. This was due to a number of factors:

- the NEC had not been able to carry out very much basic 'How to Vote' voter education, and many voters did not know what they were meant to do in Polling Stations;
- political organisations were generally known by their names, rather than by their logos, which led to confusion amongst the largely illiterate voters;
- the basic concept of a personal, secret, choice is still very new;
- in many Polling Stations, there was a feeling of urgency, to get voters through as fast as possible.

The result was that in many cases voters asked Polling Station staff or political organisation agents to mark their ballots, according to their publicly expressed choice. There was no evidence or reports of coercion or of misrepresentation of voters' wishes, but in many cases the vote was not secret.

The overriding impression was that everyone was eager for the first democratic election in Somaliland to go well, and for voters to be able to express their wishes.

To put this right for future elections, the NEC will have to have more detailed 'How to Vote' information campaigns, both before the voting day and at Polling Stations. There

will also need to be more precise training for NEC staff and for observers and agents. Finally, the NEC will need to allow more time for each voter, either by having more Polling Stations or by extending voting to two days.

### 9.3 Counting.

This was meant to take place at the Polling Station immediately after voting had ended. In most cases, this was the case, but in some places the absence of lighting caused the Polling Station staff, accompanied by the political organisation agents and by the police, to return to the DEO's office.

In general, it was reported that counting was painstakingly thorough, with full participation from all present. Particular attention was paid to potentially spoilt ballots, to try to ascertain the intentions of the voter.

After the count of each Polling Station, the results were totalled by District and the councillors seats allocated based on proportional representation.

## **10. Civic and Voter Education**

The NEC had developed its own document, 'Learn about your Rights and Responsibilities', which formed the basis of much of its civic education campaign. A copy of this is in Annex J.

The bulk of the civic and voter education was carried out by the NEC, through the printed media and through radio and television. Much of it, in particular the civic education in the newspapers, was highly formalised, consisting of reprints of the Electoral Law and of extracts from 'Learn about your Rights...' The impact of the formal media on a largely illiterate population with limited access to radio and TV coverage is arguable: however, the NEC had started this campaign and the TAM supported them.

Additional education campaigns authorised by the NEC, largely instigated by the TAM, were less formal and were designed to make the most of Somaliland's oral traditions. The NEC sent out mobile loudspeaker teams. These visited mainly rural districts, broadcasting basic 'why vote' and 'how to vote' messages in twenty to thirty polling districts in each region. The NEC also sent out two travelling Drama Groups, one visiting nine districts to the east of Somaliland and the other visiting twenty-two towns and villages to the west. Finally, the NEC sponsored two poetry competitions, one for women, and one for men, to spread the word about democracy and elections. The winning poems were broadcast on Radio Hargeisa.

The NEC commissioned a locally produced film record of the electoral process, covering registration, voting and counting. This should be a valuable training resource for the future.

Neither member of the TAM are civic education experts, nor did we have the time to measure the impact of various campaigns. However, feedback from districts was generally very positive, with DEOs reporting large and interested crowds.

For reference, and for the possible use of future electoral assistance programmes, the TAM has audio and videotapes of radio and TV broadcasts, of the drama group performances and of the entries for the poetry competition (see Annex K). These are currently (December 2002) held by the GTZ Demobilisation Project in Hargeisa.

## **11. Domestic Observers.**

As made clear in the Project Document, it is important to establish a tradition of organised domestic electoral observation in Somaliland. This will encourage the concept that the efficient organisation of the electoral process is in everyone's interests. It will also inculcate the idea -- from the very beginning -- that the common citizen has the right to learn what is going on from non-official sources.

The TAM therefore made contact with two local NGO umbrella groups -- the Consortium of the Somaliland Non-Governmental Organisations ('COSONGO') and NAGAAD<sup>2</sup> -- seeking to set up a mechanism for domestic electoral observation. After discussions, COSONGO and NAGAAD agreed to work together to organise domestic electoral observation across the country, funded by the international donors.

The original concept was to have an observer in each of the 800 planned Polling Stations. However, when detailed planning was complete and logistic, personnel and budgetary resources had been fully assessed, this was reduced to coverage for 400 Polling Stations (56% of the actual number of stations).

The COSONGO/NAGAAD preliminary report is attached in Annex L. This describes their methodology, training, reporting and summarises their conclusions and recommendations. It also includes a summary of the immediate post-electoral period. The relevant contact for more detailed information is Abdi Sahardid Askar, the Coordinator of the domestic observation, whose e-mail address is [abdisahard@hotmail.com](mailto:abdisahard@hotmail.com).

In summary, the COSONGO/NAGAAD observers reported that:

- voting took place peaceably throughout the country
- there were no significant organisational problems that prevented scheduled Polling Stations from opening as planned ('... rated the polling process as good or very good in 90% of their reports.');
- there were a number of procedural errors in voting

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<sup>2</sup> NAGAAD, in the Somali language, means "settling down". It was taken as the name for an umbrella group of women's NGOs on the return of IDPs to Hargeisa, Burao and Berbera after the civil war of 1994-1996. Source: NEC



- a number of electors ('60% in towns, up to 70% in rural areas') could not vote due to a shortage of Polling Stations; no evidence was offered to substantiate these figures;
- political party agents were generally present in Polling Stations, but not all political organisations were represented everywhere;
- counting took place in an orderly and competent manner.

The principal recommendations are:

- that more training be given to NEC staff;
- that more time be given to Voter Education, along the basic 'how to...' lines;
- that there be more Polling Stations, to ensure that everyone can vote who wants to and is entitled to;
- that acknowledged procedural errors be rectified.

In considering the activities of the domestic observers, before passing judgement and making invidious comparison it is relevant to note:

- this exercise had never been attempted in Somaliland;
- the organisers were on a very restricted budget, on a tight timetable and had limited national resources upon which to draw;
- the TAM did not have the time or resources to give the domestic observers the support they deserved;
- domestic observers covered about 55% of the Polling Stations;
- the bulk of their reports were returned to Hargeisa in time for a provisional consolidated report to be issued within 10 days of the district count starting.

Given adequate support from the international donor community in 2003, there is no doubt that the quality and depth of the domestic observers' work can be achieved.

## **12. International Observers**

There was no coordinated international observer effort, nor were there present any formal international groups. There were a number of internationals present for these elections, and an ad hoc meeting took place on 17<sup>th</sup> December to exchange experiences and views. Those present included:

Paul Simkin (Chair)	EC
Paul Crook	EC
Henrik Jespersen	Danish Embassy, Nairobi
Owen Richards	British Embassy, Addis Ababa.
Manfret Gers	TAM
Nick Selsey	TAM
Elin Svedjemo	TAM
Steve Kibble	CIIR London
Mat Bryden	War Torn Societies
Hussein Bulhan	APD

Adan Adoker	ICD
Mark Bradbury	ICD
Hugh Fenton	DRC
Emman Sandahl	(Student)

In general, all of those present were impressed with the level of organisation and commitment shown by the NEC and by the voters.

### **13. Media Training**

A Media Training Workshop was held from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> November in Hargeisa. Instigated by the NEC and organised by the Forum for Peace and Governance, the workshop was financially supported by the EU, Action Aid, International Cooperation for Development, and the Pastoral and Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa ('PENHA').

The principal aims of this workshop were:

- to inform and engage the local media professionals
- to enable local media personnel to provide an independent and critical analysis of the electoral process
- to enable media personnel to provide a balanced assessment of the electoral process
- to enable participants to understand their role in providing equal access to all political organisations.

The report on the workshop is attached in Annex M.

### **14. What happens next -- Reinforcement of Democratic Practices**

The Local Council elections of 15<sup>th</sup> December 2002 were largely successful. To capitalise on the success of these elections, Somaliland will greatly benefit from further support, in particular:

- financial and technical support for the Presidential election
- training for newly elected councillors

Financial and technical support for the Presidential election should concentrate on reinforcing institutional strengths and on rectifying identified weaknesses, such as:

- continued technical advice for the NEC;
- continued financial support to aspects of the NEC core operations;
- support to the NEC's Voter Education programme, with greater emphasis on the 'How to...';
- support to the NEC's training programmes for its staff, with greater emphasis on practical aspects of managing Polling Stations;

- continued support to domestic observers;
- continued support to the NEC's management structure, in particular the level of operational managers;
- continued training for the media;
- continued support to political parties.

Training for newly elected councillors would best be supplied through a dedicated programme, covering rights and responsibilities, legal and constitutional base and budgets (creating, financing and adherence to).

Manfred Gers, Chief Technical Advisor  
Nicholas M. Valentine-Selsey, Logistics and Financial Advisor

December 2002.

**List of Annexes attached to the original Report**

ANNEX A	Project Document (abbreviated)
ANNEX B	NEC Communique of 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2002
ANNEX C	Distribution of District Councillors
ANNEX D	Members of the National Electoral Commission of the Republic of Somaliland
ANNEX E	Results of the Local Council Elections, by Region
ANNEX F	Code of Conduct for Political Parties
ANNEX G	Code of Conduct between Political Parties and the National Electoral Commission
ANNEX H	Selection of Briefing Papers prepared by the Technical Advisor Mission for the National Electoral Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identification of Concepts – what the NEC needs to do</li> <li>○ Support notes for Trainers of Trainers</li> <li>○ Layout for Polling Station</li> <li>○ Why Register Voters?</li> <li>○ Draft Instructions for Registration Officers</li> <li>○ Draft Observer Handbook</li> <li>○ Summary of requirements of electoral documents</li> <li>○ Mobile Loudspeaker Teams – Deployment Schedule</li> <li>○ Programme for REOs and DEOs pre-election workshop</li> <li>○ Developing a security concept for the NEC</li> <li>○ Communications diagram</li> <li>○ Chains of communication and of command</li> <li>○ Ballot Papers – distribution plan</li> <li>○ Voting Day – reporting system</li> </ul>
ANNEX I	Specimen of a Voter Registration Card

Translation from the Somali of the information recorded on the Registration Card

<i>Serial number of card</i>	<i>Date of registration</i>	
<i>Full name and sex of Bearer</i>		<i>District Council elections</i>
<i>Name of mother of Bearer</i>		<i>Presidential election</i>
<i>Date and place of birth of Bearer</i>		<i>Parliamentary elections</i>
<i>District /Region of Bearer</i>		
<i>Residence of Bearer</i>		
<i>Bearer's assigned Polling Station</i>		
<i>Name/signature of Issuing Officer</i>		<i>Stamp of Issuing Officer</i>

ANNEX J	National Electoral Commission document “Learn about your Rights and Responsibilities”
ANNEX K	List of video and audiocassettes of civic education messages broadcast on the authority of the NEC
ANNEX L	COSONGO/NAGAAD Report
ANNEX M	Report on Media Training Workshop
ANNEX N	Example of a ballot paper