

# Geneva Dialogue on Environment, Climate, Conflict, and Peace: Meeting 30

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6 participants

## **Presentation on Somali Greenpeace Association by Hassan Yasin**

Hassan is a professional in public health and public administration, global climate change teacher, activist and humanitarian. Co-founder and executive director of Somali Greenpeace Association (SOGPA), gender activist, member of UN Environment Programme for Children and Youth (UNEP MGCY), the African Youth Initiative on Climate Change (AYICC) and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance.

### **What SOGPA is**

- Civil society non-profit organisation led by young, energetic youth
- Committed to promoting climate and environmental justice in Somalia
- Formed in 2019

### **What SOGPA does**

1. Climate Change adaptation and resilience programmes, teaching and training
2. Environmental education and awareness – from young people up to government
  - National youth environmental assembly
  - 89 % of participants did not know of any laws or policies to protect the environment in Somalia before
3. Marine and terrestrial biodiversity conservation
4. Community mobilization: bring communities to advocate on different issues e.g. against deforestation for charcoal

### **How SOGPA does things**

1. Campaigns and advocacy: climate justice for Somalia, empowering the demand for compensation and loss and damage
2. Action for climate empowerment: training to increase understanding
  - Trained more than 1000 young people
3. Tree planting and ecological restoration: support new generation to participate in restoration activities
4. Intergenerational dialogue: bring different stakeholders (incl. government, civil society, youth, women) together on major environmental concerns and come up with solutions
5. Environmental peacebuilding: the environment also needs peace

### **Impacts:**

- More than 2000 people were taught about climate change and how it impacts their livelihoods
- Communities were enabled to take effective action against environmental degradation in their respective districts

- Youth, women, and local people have understood the danger of plastic bags to marine life à beach cleaning campaigns
- More youth, women men and civil society are now coming together and address climate change issues and climate change-induced insecurities in Somalia
- People who were trained are re-training others in Baidoa, Galdogob and Abudwak
- White paper on environmental peacebuilding and how civil society in Somalia is responding developed by SOGPA and FinSom

### **Global contributions**

- Facilitated the African Regional Session on meaningful inclusion of youth voices in decision-making in environmental governance, in preparation of UNEA-5.2
- Contribution to the Somali pilot of UNEP STRATA

### **Success stories**

- People are more aware and have started planting trees
- SOGPA is being invited to virtual and in-person international negotiations on climate change, e.g. Stockholm+50
- SOGPA has done cross-learning with civil society organisations from Somalia and Kenya

### **Strengths**

- Passionate youth volunteers
- Policy and procedures in place
- Recognised locally and internationally

### **Gaps/weaknesses**

- Lack of funding for operational costs
- Capacity-building
- Technical support
- Strong organisational management

### **Discussion:**

- How does environmental degradation affect the degradation of security? How much of the environmental degradation has led to insecurity situations?
  - o Hassan's examples: conflict between communities linked to competition around scarce natural resources, predominantly pastures and water à several deadly incidents in Somalia this year (at least 5 times)
- SOGPA has not yet systematically explored the possibility of having carbon credit markets sponsor their work
  - o One example: SOGPA involved in a regional project where they received carbon credit funding after planting mangroves

- SOGPA has links to like-minded organisations in Somaliland (but no political links)
- Overexploitation of marine resources is closely connected to piracy in Somalia – how is the situation today?
  - o SOGPA is not working on this issue politically
  - o Government does not have the power to secure the whole Somali coastline as the coastguards are very weak – locals say the international fleets come very close to the shoreline where local fishers are fishing
  - o Government cannot take legal actions
  - o SOGPA met with representatives of the Ministry of Fisheries who said they want to develop coastal protection policies
  - o Partner with Oxfam on this issue
  - o Give support to organisations that are developing coastal protection policies, and connect with the government who is willing to
- How does the security situation in Somalia affect SOGPA's work?
  - o It limits the accessibility of some areas
  - o SOGPA sometimes receives threats from armed groups
  - o They mainly work in government-controlled areas because in areas controlled by terrorist groups, they cannot carry out their work effectively and are at risk
  - o Bomb explosions are a big risk, because you never know when and where they happen
  - o Many activists experience threats, not only the ones working on environmental topics
- SOGPA needs capacity-building and technical support
  - o Many of their volunteers are from other sectors, so they would need training on environmental issues etc.

**Contact Hassan if you are interested in cooperating with or supporting SOGPA:**

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