



## UNITED NATIONS SOMALIA

### UN Communications Strategy 2009-2010<sup>1</sup>

#### Executive Summary

This communications strategy aims at improving the coherence of UN Somalia internal and external communications through both common messaging and a common system. Its deliverables include:

- Perceptions of the UN are improved and transparency is boosted within the Somali public
- Engagement of Diaspora groups is fostered
- Consistent and more positive messaging with the donor community is reinforced
- Relations with and common messaging to international media are enhanced
- UN staff is adequately informed of UN activities and of their rights and obligations.

This will be achieved by adopting a common approach and committing at the policy level to a common communications framework and implementation mechanisms.

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<sup>1</sup> This strategy was adopted by the UNCT on 24 October 2008. It was also agreed a person will be hired in order to lead and monitor its implementation and ensure the engagement and active participation of all UN agencies.

## Introduction

In August 2008, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) requested the UN Information Group (UNIG) to develop a joint Communications Strategy for Somalia in order to address existing perceptions about the UN's work in Somalia and to improve its profile. During January 2008, a joint work plan was developed by the Information Group agreeing on a set of joint activities arising out of each agency's own communication priorities for Somalia.

## Background

By September 2008, Somalia was unfolded in a worsening humanitarian situation where 43 % of the entire population were in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. In addition, the security situation deteriorated substantially, with frequent attacks to Ethiopian armed forces, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Somali people (elders, judges, business men), the UN and NGOs. On the other hand, the signing of the Djibouti peace agreement between the TFG and the ARS (Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia) offered hope of lasting peace and stability to a country in conflict over the past 18 years.

Although the context might rapidly change and policy constraints must be acknowledged, the UN needs a common communication framework to improve coherence and address common perceived misconceptions. Communication is also vital in enabling effective inter-agency work and in generating the necessary funds to address the humanitarian crisis as well as recovery and development needs. The coherence of the messaging on UN's political, development and humanitarian work therefore must be strengthened.

## Objectives

The main objective of this strategy is to bring coherence to UN internal and external communications in order to positively influence or improve perceptions of the UN in Somalia; to support the promotion of an enabling environment for the work of the UN; reassert impartiality; improve credibility; to improve understanding of the UN's work and its transparency. This will be achieved by sharing and disseminating more and clearer information on the holistic approach of UN activities, by communicating better, in a coordinated manner and in all directions and by using communications to promote greater transparency. The issue of expectations also needs to be addressed: what the UN can deliver and what is reasonable to expect the UN to deliver. Sophisticated messaging is therefore required.

## Perceptions

The history of the UN's involvement in Somalia is extremely complex and has left a legacy of mistrust amongst Somalis and international partners, as well as donors.

There are globally both positive and negative perceptions about the UN in Somalia depending on the specific audiences but the overall perception is generally negative. The UN's humanitarian, political and development activities contribute to these perceptions. How the UN in Somalia is perceived is clearly critical in managing expectations. A lot of good work is being ignored at the expense of the more visible and 'controversial' roles of the UN in Somalia. The negative perceptions affect the means and the capacity of UN's operations through increased security constraints.

In some instances in the South Central region, the perception on the ground is that the UN is part of the Government and therefore not neutral. In other instances and locations in the same region, the

UN is perceived positively as it is seen to be addressing humanitarian and early recovery needs. In Puntland, the UN has been seen as not as involved and more focused on the conflict-prone south. UNDP's work with the unpopular TFG is better known and more visible than UN's and UNDP's community-based work. Negative perceptions of one UN agency's work are then extended to the UN overall.

Unfortunately, there is no background survey on what the perceptions about the UN in Somalia really are, neither on the ground nor internationally. The UNIG is concerned that perceptions are not based on concrete information or findings but rather on impressions and limited knowledge ('perception of perceptions' and possibly rumours) which do not provide a solid basis to develop a communication strategy. The Group therefore strongly recommends that a small scale perception/audience study is carried out, sampling a few groups and drawing on the 2006 IASC advocacy strategy, to provide a baseline for the foundation of the communication strategy. This should not prevent UNIG from moving forward with improved strategic communication while the small scale study is being undertaken. A concept note on a small scale perception/audience study is being prepared by OCHA.

## Rationale

There is a need for UN coherence. The history of the UN's involvement in Somalia is extremely complex and has left a legacy of mistrust. Until 2008, the UN undertook a multiplicity of interventions, including facilitating reconciliation, humanitarian assistance, recovery and reconstruction, and support to public security institutions, but they are often disconnected despite achievements. The SRSG and RC/HC/DO are acutely aware of the risks this entails in terms of imbalances in the UN's intervention, perceptions of the UN as biased or the risks that the UN's various parts will be manipulated to serve specific national or international agendas and the fact that the UN could not be as efficient as it could be in helping find a solution to the current problems faced by Somalis.

The rationale of this joint communications strategy entails therefore the following:

- We need to address deeply **entrenched perceptions** about the UN in Somalia.
- We are dealing with a situation where the nature of **communications can affect** our capacity to respond.
- We need more **coherence** in our communication to our own internal (staff) and external audiences.
- We need a more **strategic approach** to communications.
- UN communication will be more effective if there is a **combined effort to communicate**.
- We need to develop and agree on **joint messages** targeted at specific audiences.
- Some issues need to be **better addressed by the UN** as a whole.
- We need to address some of the **existing concerns** about the UN in Somalia.
- We need to **communicate more** about what the UN has done and is doing, on our development, humanitarian and political responses in Somalia (UN's holistic approach).
- We need to be more **transparent** in our communications – the more transparent the UN is the more trusted it will be.
- We need to be more **proactive** in our communication and speak out more rapidly and consistently when events occur.
- We need to ensure **commitment** on when not to speak publicly or on speaking on behalf of the UN if authorize.



## Accountability

The UN guiding principles on communications include<sup>2</sup>:

1. UN system must work together and speak together. This does not mean the UN must “speak with one voice,” but does mean the overall messaging should be complementary as agencies speak accordingly to their mandates. Since much of the outside world perceives UN organizations as one entity, it is critical that the communication branches of member organizations speak without contradicting each other and that, where possible, they highlight the contributions of other concerned agencies.
2. Each agency should identify its own information focal points and take the lead in areas of their expertise.
3. When complaints or criticisms are made, UN communications must display an openness to investigate errors and to report back on findings.

All members of the UNCT will be held accountable for the implementation of this strategy. It would take only one agency to not cooperate for this strategy to render it useless. Specific agencies acting on behalf of the UNCT as and when agreed (see Implementation Matrix, p.19-24) will also be held accountable. For each agency responsibility, reporting mechanisms are established and they will report to the UNCT at the minimum every 6 months (see Monitoring and Evaluation Section, p.18).

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<sup>2</sup> See also Decisions of the Secretary-General – 25 June 2008 meeting of the Policy Committee, Decision No. 2008/23 – UN Communications. It was also decided that “*The Secretariat and the heads of UN agencies, funds and programmes should take concrete measures to strengthen the UN Communications Group as a communications mechanism for the UN system at the global, regional and country level, including through the draft standard procedure for communicating in times of crisis [...]. They should also include communications personnel in the design and implementation of policy recommendations*”.



## SWOT Analysis

The following table is an effort to summarise the strengths and weaknesses of the UN system in Somalia from a communications point of view:

| Strengths  | Weaknesses  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A well known brand</li> <li>• A credible global authority</li> <li>• Good human and material resources</li> <li>• Common working frameworks for humanitarian and recovery and development i.e the CAP and the UN Transition Plan for Somalia 2008-9</li> <li>• Close working relationship with governing institutions in the three zones: South Central, Puntland and Somaliland</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HQ based in Nairobi and not on the ground</li> <li>• Language barriers</li> <li>• Agency-focused communication priorities</li> <li>• Common working platforms (UNTP, CAP) have conflicting priorities</li> <li>• Not getting enough good stories out about UN work</li> <li>• Weak internal communications inter and intra agencies</li> <li>• Lack of political will, appreciation of and investment in the communication function in agencies, especially when joint (not in ToRs, accountability)</li> <li>• Weak institutional memory</li> <li>• Resistance to 'One UN' concept, territoriality of agencies and spaces (humanitarian, development and political)</li> <li>• High turn-over of PI/Communications focal points and lack of them in country</li> <li>• Inexistence or weak capacity of local media</li> </ul> |
| Opportunities  | Threats   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common working platforms e.g. UNTP and CAP</li> <li>• Relatively strong UNIG</li> <li>• Information hungry local and international media</li> <li>• International focus on Somalia</li> <li>• Strong Somali Diaspora</li> <li>• Peace process ongoing</li> <li>• Shifting from agency-based communications to issue-based communications</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpredictable political future in Somalia</li> <li>• Insecurity for humanitarian actors in Somalia</li> <li>• Inaccessibility to locations within Somalia by international media and actors</li> <li>• Media fatigue from 'endless' Somalia crisis</li> <li>• Perception of UN as running the central government</li> </ul>  |

## Strategy

This strategy aims to:

- Communicate as one UN where and when possible, with common messages and simple mechanisms, to simplify the often confusing set-up and organization of the UN system for the public, providing them with the option of a unified source for UN information and access.
- Communicate our constraints and achievements showing both what we are not doing or not able to do as well as demonstrate more what the UN is doing in a comprehensive manner.
- Shift as much as possible from agency-based communications to issue-based communications in order to strengthen UNCT messages and products. Issue-based communications will aim to complete and reinforce a broader expertise from respective agencies.
- Improve a full range of communication services: public information, programme communications and internal communication.



## Audiences

Target audiences have been defined as follows:

1. Somali public
2. Diaspora
3. Donor community
4. International media and general public
5. UN staff (internal)

### Target audience 1: Somali Public

The key word for our communication with the Somali public is 'transparency' – clearly and openly communicate what the UN as a whole is doing, what it is not doing, why and under what principles we are operating, in order manage the expectations of Somalis on the ground.

Somali audiences can be categorized as follows: a) The beneficiaries (the local communities) b) Institutions (local administrations, civil society groups which include, the media, women, youth, private sector) c) Religious institutions d) Learning institutions and e) Traditional leaders.

When communicating what the UN does and how it does it, we need to emphasize the complimentary nature of our political, humanitarian and development work.

#### **a) Perceptions**

There are very diverse views of the UN among the different segments of Somali public.

On the humanitarian side, the humanitarian community's response in Somalia, today and in the past, has given rise to a situation with low credibility among Somalis, including local authorities and beneficiaries, which has negatively affected the ability to deliver humanitarian assistance. The lack of engagement and consultation has created a divide between the 'givers' and the 'receivers' creating a lack of trust and enabling environment in which perceptions or resources can be exploited.

Some think certain areas are getting less assistance than others.<sup>3</sup> Some actors, even in the South Central region, seem to perceive the UN positively, but want to distance themselves from the UN because of the negative implications and threats they feel it brings to themselves.

Some institutions (local administrations, opposition groups, civil society groups, etc) view the UN as a partial entity that favors one group over the other. These groups perceive the UN negatively and view it in the political sense biased rather than working impartially in delivering humanitarian assistance and supporting the development of institutional structures. They also argue that UNDP's support for the Transitional Federal Government undermines the role of other groups in the country's political process. Irrespective of the other work that the UN is carrying out, they tend to see some UN work going against their interest.

The negative perception about the UN is generally perpetuated by groups opposing the TFG, and some civil society groups which hold the UN as a partner of convenience. These groups have access to the local media and air their perceived grievances against the UN through this channel.

At the local level, UN field staff often refuse to be interviewed by local journalists and given the restrictions on international travel to Somalia, gatekeepers are frequently the first and only interlocutor

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<sup>3</sup> Note that when addressing the public in Somaliland, any linkage of Somaliland and Somalia should be avoided.

with local media. The UN must recognize that it will never control, nor should it attempt to, the Somali media, but it can have a principled, transparent and supportive relationship with them. Given the limited or inexistent contact of UN staff with local population, the UN can also be perceived as foreign “spies” never seeable (hidden in the common compounds).

#### **b) Messages**

- The UN upholds and promotes humanitarian principles and actions although this can be affected by security conditions.
- The UN in Somalia entails humanitarian, development and political work and these areas are complementary.
- The UN seeks at the reconstruction and development assistance of Somalia promoting democratically-based state-building, including local institutions, that properly support the Somali population.

#### **c) Mechanisms / Tools**

In order to get these messages across, the UN will use the following tools:

1. Increase efforts in building relations with the local media.
2. Select and systematically use local radios (including IRIN) in the 3 Somali zones. UNIG members will be invited to contribute stories and news items to these radio programmes.
3. Reach out to “elders” and community groups and interchange views on the UN’s overall response in Somalia and in their location.
4. Visit schools by field staff to talk about UN’s role in Somalia and their geographical area (e.g. for UN observance days, such as UN Day or Human Rights Day).
5. Organize strategic radio debates between traditional elders (and/or other high profile figures) and UN selected staff.
6. Support better coordination and information flows between the UN system and UNIG by the projected OCHA Information Centres (intended to store information material produced by the various UN agencies in Somalia) and RC Offices in the field.
7. Appoint a UN Staff in each common compound in Somalia to support better coordination and information flows, promotion of UN’s work, and to become information focal points for the UNIG.
8. Update the UNCT Website ([www.somalia-un.org](http://www.somalia-un.org)) to provide access to individual agencies’ sites and highlight the holistic UN approach and collaborative activities.
9. Increase translation of information produced into Somali, which includes translating the UNCT Website ([www.somalia-un.org](http://www.somalia-un.org)) to provide a platform to interact with local partners and Somali public.
10. Hire skilled Somali speakers and/or better use Somali speaking UN staff within communications and regularly participate in the UNIG.
11. Create a communication focal point for each joint programme that ensures smooth information-sharing and coordination of all communication activities. A strong UNIG could also conduct programme communications, policy advocacy and integrated marketing communications for behavioural impact.
12. Create or expand the circle of “friends of the United Nations” in Somalia to highlight - independently of the UN- policy priorities of the United Nations in Somalia and the rationale behind them.
13. Create a frequently Q&A in Somali language for Somali public which includes addressing sensitive issues and UN holistic approach in Somalia.

14. Undertake Somali Media Awards annually in order to recognize and value positive reporting of humanitarian, development and political issues aside.
15. Train selected local journalists in UN issues to enhance their knowledge of the UN's comprehensive work.
16. Create a UN Radio for Somalia.<sup>4</sup>

**d) Resources required**

\$20,000 annually This is calculated on the use of local radios, the organization of radio debates, the support to the creation of a circle of "friends for the United Nations," train journalists in UN 's comprehensive work and partially finance the Somali Media Awards.

**e) Risks / Constraints**

On the UN side, there is a high turnover of communication staff with degrees of funding largely varied by agencies and limited field presence.

In the Somali context, there is a lack of professional media infrastructure, in particular in South Central Somalia. There is also a lack of professional ethics among media workers. The media lacks professional equipment to deliver services to their audiences. Above all, local journalists are underpaid and have no incentives to help them serve the community professionally – these factors created the corrupt environment journalists are operating in. The media is bribed by gatekeepers, politicians and some civil society groups to broadcast/publish anti-UN sentiments.

Multiple trainings have been organized for Somali journalists, whether by various UN agencies or by INGOs. The UNIG is currently mapping those in order to not keep training the same journalists on the same skills but to assess first what is needed and for whom.

Insecurity, language barriers and lack of proactive professional media as well as lack of coordination between the various UN agencies' actions are major obstacles. Changing perceptions among Somalis requires not only an accurate knowledge of the evolving policy constraints but costly measures in order to create a common UN infrastructure to ensure the desired impact in the long term.

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<sup>4</sup> Note that there was no consensus within the Task Force on this measure. A UN Radio would entail significant infrastructure with a bigger potential impact on the perception of the UN in Somalia and should aim at complementing existing local radio stations. If approved, e.g. in a context of an integrated peace mission, a budget should be allocated independently.

## Target audience 2: Diaspora

The Somali Diaspora plays a key role in all aspects of Somali life – the economy, humanitarian aid, politics and business. Many of the Somali elite fled Somalia due to the civil war so the Diaspora includes many of the country's educated professionals. The Diaspora is estimated to send \$1 billion to Somalia each year (roughly twice the amount of aid spent in Somalia) which is a mainstay of the economy. It is very important to let the Diaspora know that we value their contribution, support and input and we want them to be involved and informed. We also need the Diaspora to recognize the work that the UN is doing in Somalia and to inform them that the UN is working inside Somalia for the benefit of the country and its people. Communication to the Diaspora must be a key element of a successful communications strategy. Some members of the Diaspora are very influential over local Somalis. We need to be proactive in terms of communication and engagement with the Diaspora and not wait to respond to complaints.

### a) Perceptions

The Somali Diaspora reflects widely diverging views of the UN. Some believe the UN is carrying out very good work in difficult circumstances on both the political and humanitarian front and pledge their support. Others feel the UN spends a lot of money on its own staff or workshops with little results and does not venture into Somalia. Other perceptions include seeing the UN as a US agency (financially and diplomatically supporting the TFG), believing that all stakeholders should be included in the peace process or that the UN Security Council has “failed to make good on its promise to enforce the peace agreement [i.e. Djibouti's] and deploy a replacement peace keeping force in Somalia.”

### b) Messages

The message for the Diaspora is that:

- The UN is working hard on all fronts inside Somalia and for the good of all Somalis.
- UN work is of positive benefit to the Somali people and should be supported by Somalis outside the country.
- The Diaspora is also recognised as a positive, useful force and the UN recognizes the huge contribution of the Diaspora and wants to work with it whenever and wherever possible.

### c) Mechanisms / Tools

In order to get these messages across, the UN will use the following tools:

17. Target ten of the most widely read internet sites usually related to the Diaspora. Apart from the mainstream media (BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera) members of the Diaspora also listen to BBC and VOA Somali services and watch the two most popular television stations broadcasting in Somali, Universal and Raad TV.
18. Produce stories about the UN's comprehensive work and interviews with relevant players.
19. Contact Diaspora through regular emails and creation of a comprehensive emailing list.
20. Carry out a desk review to map the Diaspora (list prominent groups and individuals) more closely and look at what media they use most and to keep track of events.
21. Convene meetings/workshops to be set up with Heads of Agencies and other key UN players when they travel abroad (e.g. US, Canada, England, Sweden).
22. Examine a mechanism for allowing the public to send emails or questions to UNCT website.

### d) Resources required

\$10,000. Resources would be needed e.g. for travel to meet Diaspora for discussions or workshops.

### e) Risks / Constraints

It is necessary to communicate with a wide section of Diaspora - not just one country, class or clan to ensure the message is spread widely. There is a risk that the view of the most vocal prevails.

## Target audience 3: Donor Community

UN operations in Somalia depend largely on external funding from donors. Those in need of assistance increased exponentially while the operating environment on the ground continued to worsen, creating higher operational and security costs for the UN, while increasing the number of people needing assistance. Other parts of the country where it is possible to work can be neglected (e.g. Puntland's perception in the 2008 UNTP mid-year review).

### a) Perceptions

Somalia is on the agenda in international and high profile forums such as the Security Council. While the perceptions of the donor community are as diverse as the community itself, it is necessary to tackle the issue of accountability and corruption, most notably since we are working by "remote-control." Some donors perceive that the UN is not effective, due to our lack of physical presence in some locations. Other donors believe that it is not possible to work in the country (that is, mostly in the South Central region), and it is therefore better to hold back available assistance until the government establishes its authority and is financially accountable. Furthermore, since donors are also working under the same if not stricter security conditions as the UN, they should be understanding of such limitation. Last but not least, some donors believe that the political process (Djibouti peace process) is likely to fail.

### b) Messages

The UN key messages for donors are:

- We do not have a choice but to continue to work in Somalia as per our mandate and obligations / We will continue working to support the Somali population.
- We can still do a great deal of work in Somalia, but we need more flexibility and security.
  - a. Given the security conditions in Somalia, operational flexibility is required, acting when operations are possible and opportunities arise, which entails higher costs.
  - b. Aid is getting through in very difficult circumstances, but requires flexibility.
  - c. Due to the security situation, we are going to have to spend more on security to be able to keep delivering while protecting our staff (in line with other countries such as Iraq or Afghanistan).
- Needs are increasing but we must avoid funding only emergency activities without planning for the mid- and long-term; even in the ongoing emergency, early recovery, recovery and development programmes are still possible and needed.
- The UN is always based on impartiality although impressions from the past (e.g. UNISOM) or the security challenges can unfortunately affect this principle.
- Let us support solidarity [to Arab/non-traditional donors during periods such as Ramadan].

### c) Mechanisms / Tools

In order to get these messages across, the UN will use the following tools:

23. Organize multisectoral/multilocation donor missions to Somalia covering the holistic UN approach.
24. Develop regular targeted briefings regularly in Nairobi on the UN.
25. Organize informal debates with donors to talk about the UN's overall response.
26. Make Headquarters (New York and Geneva) and Donor Capital advocacy more powerful by facilitating the international media particularly to get powerful film and still images.
27. Produce an assessment of non-traditional donors, tailor messages and outreach them.
28. Outreach to non-traditional donors through an Arabic speaker.



29. From the UN side, link the overall coordination mechanisms in particular improving the joint communication of UN as a whole (merging communications from clusters and UNTP systems).
30. Develop a UN press kit for donors including periodical reports and fact sheets.
31. Better inform donors through the UNCT website with targeted UN messaging.
32. Focus and report on funding gaps to donors.

**d) Resources required**

\$15,000 annually. This is calculated on organizing multisectoral/multilocation donor missions, targeted briefings, informal debates and producing assessments.

**e) Risks / Constraints**

An important risk to be avoided by all UN agencies is the communication of conflicting messages to donors from various UN agencies. Too often, each donor and aid constituency fiercely promotes its own agenda. Donor funding and/or actions could hinder UN efforts to improve overall response if the messages do not go through. The UN and the donor community have largely tried to coordinate policy among themselves, but some say that they have not taken the time to critically examine those policy choices. The policy choices of the UN in Somalia are therefore another clear constraint.

Another risk is that the prevailing insecurity may not allow conducting UN donor missions to the field and donors, like much of the aid and development community, will also be forced to develop opinions and make decisions “by remote.” On top of this there is the risk that bad reporting on Somalia and negative perceptions result in donor fatigue, at a time when the peace process requires their full support. Communication must be used to also show case the good development in Somalia, the progress, and help keep donors engaged. From the NGOs’ side, they are sometimes intimidated by the level of the UN media coverage and UN message may conflict with NGOs’ messages and interests, in which case further collaboration and discussions might be needed.



## Target audience 4: International Media and General Public

There is need for better communication on what exactly the UN is doing and the advantages and differences of the complementary approaches taken by the UN (humanitarian, development and political). The UN needs to get the message across that it is working under challenging circumstances where its main counterpart - the Government - does not enjoy majority support and is fought against by other interest groups. There is a particular need to explain the work of UN agencies where understanding is hazy such as UNDP/UNPOS. The UN must emphasize the fact that more staff are based in Somalia than in Nairobi, and that the UN is committed to staying there.

### a) Perceptions

There are widely differing perceptions of the UN in Somalia within the international media community. The location of most staff living comfortably in Nairobi yet purporting to work for the poor and underprivileged inside Somalia could undermine the UN image. There has been some extremely negative reporting about the UN's work and role in Somalia in the media and in think tank reports. There is a perception that the UN is partial due to its support to the TFG in the form of institution-building and its work to build the security services. Some observers consider that it was a mistake in 2005 to treat the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) as a working government.

### b) Messages

The messages to help the public to better understand the integrated nature of the UN's work UN are:

- UN is there – on the ground – both national and international staff. More staff are based in Somalia than in Nairobi.
- The UN work in Somalia is based on the principle of impartiality, according to the needs of the people, although factors such as security affect its operations.
- The work of the UN is very varied but complementary: humanitarian, development and political. The realities on the ground differ greatly from the southern to northern of Somalia.
- UN support to the TFG aims at creating the necessary governance's structures to support peace and development in Somalia [note that more the emphasis should be given on the "T" (transitional) not on the "G" (government)].

### c) Mechanisms / Tools

In order to get these messages across, the UN will use the following tools:

33. Organize regular field missions for media covering the holistic approach of the UN.
34. Hold media round tables in Nairobi, involving Western, Arabic and African media.
35. Monitor what is being reported by international media through BBC monitoring etc, and establish open lines of communication with them in order to correct misinformation.
36. Be proactive and send to identified contacts new and consistent information on holistic UN work in Somalia.
37. Promote positive coverage: send out more positive stories. Most of the coverage by international media on Somalia is very negative.
38. UN system Information/Promotion kit: create a common press kit to include fact sheets dedicated to the work of UNCT members covering the most important elements to their activities, as well as all communications focal points' contact details. It may also include brochures, stickers, roll-ups, etc.
39. Produce joint press releases on key UN priority issues when appropriate.
40. Update the UNCT Website ([www.somalia-un.org](http://www.somalia-un.org)) to provide access to individual agencies' sites and highlight holistic UN approach and collaborative activities.
41. Develop op-eds and work with local editors to shape commentary on local and global UN priorities.



42. Use goodwill ambassadors to raise Somalia profile and promote UN humanitarian, development and political work.
43. Improve crisis communications and management: in the event of a sudden-onset emergency –natural disasters, conflict, kidnappings, etc – the UNIG supports the IASC, the UNCT and/or official spokespeople, in managing the flow of information internally and externally through Q&A, fact sheets, drafting statements, organizing media briefings, etc. If necessary, the UNCT should consider whether additional surge communications capacity or a crisis communications expert should be recruited or requested from Headquarters.
44. Develop a Kidnapping crisis' guidelines.
45. Conceive a Frequently Asked Questions FAQ (clear statements endorsed by the UNCT on related sensitive issues).

**d) Resources required**

\$25,000 annually (\$21,000 for media missions, \$4000 for media roundtables in Nairobi).

Allocate funds to host regular media round table discussions and media missions to Somalia. (Quarterly media round tables -3 per year-, multisectoral/multilocation media missions into Somalia -4 times a year-).

International media missions into Somalia are a costly affair but the UN can enter into agreement with major international media houses (CNN, Reuters, AP, BBC etc ) to cost share. The UN has the advantage of having staff on the ground that can facilitate the missions for journalists.

**e) Risks / Constraints**

Constraints include lessened credibility due to 'remote control' operations and location in Nairobi; difficulty in carrying out media trips due to the current security situation in the South Central region and parts of Puntland. A higher level of understanding by UN Staff (and therefore commitment) on all UN activities in Somalia would also improve UN credibility for the international media and general public.



## Target audience 5: UN Internal (Staff)

The internal audience for this strategy is UN staff at the country level and can be categorized as follows: field staff (categorized by staff based in Somaliland, Puntland, South Central Somalia), Nairobi staff, national and international staff in Somalia and Nairobi, humanitarian staff, recovery and development staff, and political staff. This strategy does not address the communication between the UNCT and their respective Headquarters.

We need to bridge the current gap between the political, humanitarian and development sides of our work and remind our staff that we all work for Somalia. This requires a set of common organizational mechanisms to share knowledge and information between agencies, which at this point does not exist. These exchanges are mostly done on a person to person basis and as a result, for example, the accuracy and relevance of information available to staff varies widely between agencies. Information about security is a particular concern.

Problems within the system can be information overload with some information going to some staff members, with one agency getting better information than others. We need to clarify what is the minimum communication that needs to be got across to all staff.

The UNCT needs to explore what mechanisms exist for communicating with all UN staff, where improvements can be made and what should be agency specific. We also need to look at the means by which we communicate with the field. A clear concern is the need to be able to target different categories of staff (field v. Nairobi; national v. international; Somaliland v. Puntland v. South Central; humanitarian v. political and development) with information relevant to them. In addition, staff on different types of contracts may have different levels of commitment to the UN and some feel they are not treated equally, which requires constant, targeted and consistent internal communication to explain the differences, the rules that apply or should be applied.

### a) Perceptions

UNDP, by carrying out its work in support of the TFG, is perceived to be associated with it. This is particularly tricky as the TFG is heavily fought by other stakeholders in-country. This results in other agencies distancing themselves from the work of UNDP. UNPOS' work also significantly affects the perception of the UN as a whole.

Perceptions on "One-UN" vary widely among staff. Some feel that "One UN" is a possibility in Nairobi (through "excessive amount" of inter-agency meetings), but, in the field, agencies are very much dividing their work along humanitarian/development roles, and these identities prevail. Some assert that on the contrary, the feeling of working together as UN is stronger in the field (with a small but good team in certain locations). Some colleagues also consider that the 'One UN' feeling only surfaces in case of common problems or threats - but otherwise agencies are working on separate tracks (political, humanitarian and development), being competitive rather than collaborative. Actually, some believe it is preferable to communicate not as One UN but separately given the current situation and the conflict of interests of the different UN agendas. Others feel that staff would have a sense of belonging to the UN family in cases of successful activities and programmes. Another widespread perception is that staff view the UN as a huge bureaucracy especially for implementing field programmes - and that the bureaucracy is an obstacle to efficiency in the field. There is also a perception that consultants from Northern America and Europe are better paid than African consultants.

### b) Messages

The UN key internal messages are:

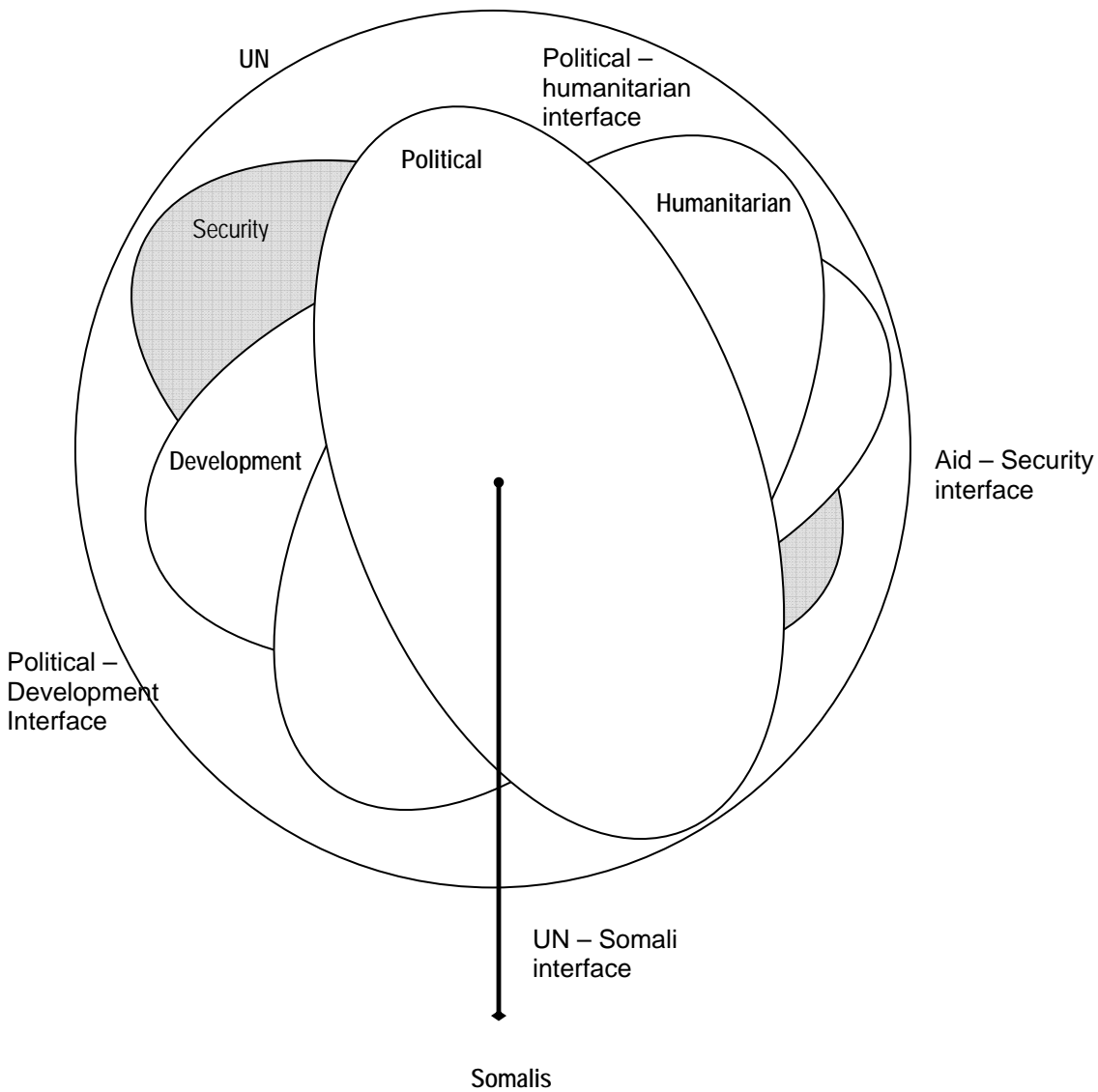
- "We are here to stay" - the UN remains engaged in Somalia.
- The humanitarian, development and political work is all complementary. We all work towards peace, recovery and development in Somalia.
- Relocation does not mean that we are cutting down on staff.



- As UN employee, I have rights and obligations.
- We are all part of the bigger system - the UN family.
- Security: UN takes responsibility for everyone, all UN employees.

### - Key interfaces affecting UN work in Somalia

UN work in Somalia includes different agendas (political, development and humanitarian spaces). It is not a matter of trying to remove one of them. If frictions arise between those spaces, sometimes it will not be possible to fix them, but the necessary step is to be aware and manage those spaces and frictions in order to achieve the overall UN goals in support of Somalis.



### **c) Mechanisms / Tools**

In order to get these messages across, the UN will use the following tools:

46. Hold regular meetings at the intra-agency level.
47. Create a debate space to be open for all UNCT staff to discuss issues and help clarify misinformation or perceptions among ourselves, and topic lunch forums on common issues.
48. Establish regular informal events to bring staff together, such as monthly coffee breaks and breakfasts. A 'UN in Somalia' day might be an option (these informal events could be announced through text messages sent to all staff).
49. Conduct/commission surveys of staff and stakeholders to determine their attitudes and behaviour on key issues including coherence.
50. Improvement of internal communications, through continuing the regular RC/HC/DO letter to all staff, general staff meetings, seminars and briefings.
51. Organize regular staff meetings with videoconferencing for the staff in the field with RC/HC/DO and Nairobi staff.
52. UN internal celebration at least for UN Day (24 October) gathering in the main UN offices and providing a speech from the highest UN authority to UN Staff.
53. Provision of assistance to smaller agencies without information capacity in order to profile their projects and improve positive coverage.
54. Creation of or otherwise update the calendar of media and public events (to be uploaded in the website or circulated in a monthly basis).
55. Training of UN information focal points and UN Representatives in various skill areas, such as on outreach and communications.
56. Regular meetings between information focal points (UNIG) and programme managers in order to promote key programme initiatives and present a coherent image of UN efforts in Somalia. Other UN staff may also be invited.
57. Attendance of appointed UNIG members to monthly meetings of the Inter-agency Programme Group, Operations Management Team and any other relevant meetings to ensure that communications elements are also followed up if so decided and foment information sharing.
58. Improvement of internal information flows, in particular on security and development events/progress (once received by the respective Head of Agency, he/she is accountable for dissemination internally). The DSS security bulletin should be widely and regularly sent to all staff.
59. Creation of UN focal point(s) to receive information from all staff in order to improve bottom-up information flows.
60. Develop a comprehensive UN induction package for new staff. Induction guidelines should be common to all agencies.
61. Raise awareness on rights and obligations of all UN's employees: distribute UN Charter's booklet, cards on code of conduct, etc. to emphasise the code of conduct and report of violations.
62. Send all staff based in Nairobi to Somalia at least once per year.
63. Hire a full-time person to lead and monitor the implementation of the strategy and ensure the engagement and active participation of all UN Agencies.



**d) Resources required**

\$15,000 annually. This is calculated on costs for the development of an induction package for new staff, purchase of UN Charter's booklet, cards and information items, training of UN information focal points and UN Representatives, holding regular informal UN staff meetings and celebrations, and conducting internal surveys.

A full time person would also be needed to handle internal UN communication or alternatively two part-time persons (budget should in any case be allocated separately), as well as a designated person in each agency to be "in charge" of internal communication and liaise with the person in charge. Although internal communication is a shared responsibility between senior management, HR and communication, it is felt that one person should be ultimately responsible to move it forward.

**e) Risks / Constraints**

Typically, internal communication is given less importance than external communication. However both go together. It is therefore critical that management acknowledges the importance to allocate resources (mostly, staff time) to this. A full time person will need to run this e.g. from the RC Office. That person(s) will need to be very clear on what information should not be disclosed. She/he will also have to work around the lack of inter agency sharing culture and in particular of institutional memory and the tendency of creating knowledge silos (no shared intranet, drives or databases). An additional constraint is the competition between agencies, for visibility or credit, which sometimes takes over cooperation.



## Monitoring and Evaluation

UNIG will review bi-annually the communications strategy in order to adapt and localize public information mandates to take into account the changing national environment and local needs.

Responsible parties (as agreed in the Implementation Matrix) will send a report every 6 months (June 2009, December 2009, June 2010, and December 2010) to UNIG focal points. UNIG will subsequently facilitate gathering the bi-annual reports of each responsible agency in order to coherently present it to the UNCT.

## Funding and Human Resources

Apart and in coherence with the budget allocated in the UNIG's annual work plan, this strategy will count on a pooled fund managed by the RC Office for each party to undertake its commitments. Lead agencies of offices within the task forces created will receive the funds, be accountable for spending them and ensuring that activities are implemented, and reporting on these activities to the UNIG.

Effective joint communications requires skilled professionals who are willing to commit their time to joint activities. The information focal points' TORs will need to include that 10-20% of their time will be devoted to joint communications activities. UN agency heads will need to regularly reinforce their commitments, recruit new staff when appropriate and reward active staff for their contributions to the success of the UNIG team. Trainings to strengthen them will be essential in order to balance the perception that joint communications result in additional work or more complex tasks.



## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX [DRAFT]

| <b>UN Communication Strategy: Bringing coherence to UN internal and external communications to improve UN's profile in Somalia</b> |   |   |                  |                          |                   |
|--|---|---|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Audience</b>  | <b>UN Messages</b>  | <b>UN Measures</b>  | <b>Resources</b> | <b>Responsible Party</b> | <b>Time-frame</b> |
| <b>Outcome 1: Perceptions of the UN are improved and transparency is boosted within the Somali public</b>                          |   |   |                  |                          |                   |
| <b>Somali Public</b>   | <p>“The UN upholds to and promotes the humanitarian principles and its humanitarian actions although this can be affected by security conditions”.</p> <p>“The UN in Somalia entails humanitarian, development and political work and these areas are complementary”.</p> <p>“The UN seeks at the reconstruction and development assistance of Somalia promoting democratically-based state-building, including local institutions, that properly support the Somali population”.</p> | 1. Increase effort into building relations with the local media.  | X                |                          |                   |
|  |   | 2. Select and use local radios (including IRIN) in the 3 Somali zones. UNIG members will be invited to contribute stories and news items to these radio programmes.   |                  |                          |                   |
|  |   | 3. Reach out to “elders” and community groups and interchange views on the UN's overall response in Somalia and in their location.  | X                |                          |                   |
|  |   | 4. Visit schools by field staff to talk about UN's role in Somalia and their geographical area (e.g. for UN observance days, such as UN Day or Human Rights Day).   | X                |                          |                   |
|  |   | 5. Organize strategic radio debates between traditional elders (high profile figures) and UN selected staff.  |                  |                          |                   |
|  |   | 6. Support better coordination and information flows between the UN system and UNIG by the projected OCHA Information Centres and RC Offices in the field.  | X                |                          |                   |
|  |   | 7. Appoint a UN Staff in each common compound in Somalia to support better coordination and information flows, promotion of UN's work, and to become information focal points for the UNIG.   | X                |                          |                   |
|  |   | 8. Update the UNCT Website ( <a href="http://www.somalia-un.org">www.somalia-un.org</a> ) to provide access to individual agencies' sites and highlight holistic UN approach and collaborative activities.  | X                |                          |                   |
|  |   | 9. Increase translation of information produced into Somali, which includes translating the UNCT Website ( <a href="http://www.somalia-un.org">www.somalia-un.org</a> ) to provide a platform to interact with local partners.  |                  |                          |                   |
|  |   | 10. Hire skilled Somali speakers and/or better use of Somali speaking UN staff within communications and regularly participate in the UNIG.   |                  |                          |                   |
|  |   | 11. Create a communication focal point for each joint programme who ensures smooth information-sharing and coordination of all communication activities. A strong UNIG could also conduct programme communications, policy advocacy and integrated marketing communications for behavioural impact. | X                |                          |                   |
|  |   | 12. Create or expand the circle of “friends of the United Nations” in Somalia to highlight -independently of the UN- policy priorities of the United Nations in Somalia and the rationale behind them.  |                  |                          |                   |
|  |   | 13. Create a frequently Q&A in Somali language for Somali public which includes addressing sensitive issues and UN holistic approach in Somalia.  | X                |                          |                   |
|  |   | 14. Undertake Somali Media Awards annually in order to recognize and value positive reporting of humanitarian, development and political issues aside.  |                  |                          |                   |
|  |   | 15. Train selected local journalists in UN issues to enhance their knowledge of the UN's work.  |                  |                          |                   |
|  |   | 16. Create a UN Radio for Somalia.  |                  |                          |                   |
|  |   |   | \$20000          |                          |                   |



|  |  |  |          |  |  |
|--|--|--|----------|--|--|
|  |  |  | annually |  |  |
|--|--|--|----------|--|--|

| <b>Audience</b>   | <b>UN Messages</b>  | <b>UN Measures</b>  | <b>Resources</b> | <b>Responsible Party</b> | <b>Time-frame</b> |
|---|---|---|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Outcome 2: Engagement of Diaspora groups is fostered</b> |   |   |                  |                          |                   |
| <b>Diaspora</b>   | The UN is working hard on all fronts inside Somalia and for the good of Somalis.  | 17. Target ten of the most widely read internet sites usually related to the Diaspora and other mainstream media if feasible (BBC, VOA Somali services, Universal and Raad TV). |                  |                          |                   |
|   |   | 18. Produce stories about the UN's work and interviews with relevant players.   |                  |                          |                   |
|   | UN work is of positive benefit to the Somali people and should be supported by Somalis outside the country.   | 19. Contact through regular emails and creation of a comprehensive emailing list for the Diaspora.  | X                |                          |                   |
|   |   | 20. Carry out a desk review to map the Diaspora (list prominent groups and individuals) more closely and look at what media they use most and to keep track of events.          | X                |                          |                   |
|   | The Diaspora is also recognised as a potentially positive, useful force and the UN recognizes the huge contribution of the Diaspora and wants to work with it whenever and wherever possible. | 21. Convene meetings/workshops to be set up with Heads of Agencies and other key UN players when they travel abroad (e.g. US, Canada, UK, Sweden).                              |                  |                          |                   |
|   |   | 22. Examine a mechanism for allowing the public to send emails or questions to UNCT website.  | X                |                          |                   |
|   |   |   | \$10000 annually |                          |                   |

| Audience  | UN Messages   | UN Measures  | Resources        | Responsible Party | Time-frame |
|---|---|--|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| <b>Outcome 3: Consistent and more positive messaging with the donor community is reinforced</b> |   |  |                  |                   |            |
| <b>Donors</b>   | We will continue working to support the Somali population.  | 23. Organize multisectoral/multilocation donor missions to Somalia covering the holistic UN approach.  |                  |                   |            |
|   |   | 24. Develop regular targeted briefings regularly in Nairobi on the UN.   |                  |                   |            |
|   | We can still do a great deal of work in Somalia, but we need more flexibility and security (incl. submessages a,b and c).                     | 25. Organize informal debates with donors to talk about the UN's overall response.   |                  |                   |            |
|   |   | 26. Make Headquarters (New York and Geneva) and Donor Capital advocacy more powerful by facilitating the international media particularly to get powerful film and still images.                 |                  |                   |            |
|   | Needs are increasing but we must avoid funding only emergency activities without planning for the mid- and long-term.                         | 27. Produce an assessment of non-traditional donors.   | X                |                   |            |
|   |   | 28. Outreach to non-traditional donors through an Arabic speaker.  |                  |                   |            |
|   | The UN is always based on impartiality although impressions from the past or the security challenges can unfortunately affect this principle. | 29. From the UN side, link the overall coordination mechanisms in particular improving the joint communication of the UN as a whole (merging communications from the clusters and UNTP systems). | X                |                   |            |
|   |   | 30. Develop a UN press kit for donors including periodical reports and fact sheets.  |                  |                   |            |
|   | Let us support solidarity [to Arabnon-traditional].   | 31. Better inform through the UNCT website to donors with targeted UN messaging.   | X                |                   |            |
|   |   | 32. Focus and report on funding gaps to donors.  | X                |                   |            |
|   |   |  | \$15000 annually |                   |            |

| Audience   | UN Messages  | UN Measures  | Resources         | Responsible Party | Time-frame |
|--|--|--|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| <b>Outcome 4: Relations with and common messaging to the international media are enhanced</b>  |  |  |                   |                   |            |
| <b>Intl. media and public</b>  | UN is there – on the ground. More staff are based in Somalia than in Nairobi.  | 33. Organize regular field missions for media covering the holistic approach of the UN.  |                   |                   |            |
|  | The UN work in Somalia is based on the principle of impartiality, according to the needs of the people, although factors such as security affect its capabilities.<br><br>The work of the UN is very varied but complementary : humanitarian, development and political. The realities on the ground differ greatly from the South to the North of Somalia.<br><br>UN support to the TFG aims at creating the necessary governance's structures to support peace and development in Somalia [note that more the emphasis should be given on the "T" (transitional) not on the "G" (government)]. | 34. Hold media round tables in Nairobi, involving Western, Arabic and African media.   |                   |                   |            |
|  |  | 35. Monitor what is being reported by international media through BBC monitoring etc, and establish open lines of communication with them in order to correct misinformation.  | X                 |                   |            |
|  |  | 36. Be proactive and send to identified contacts new and consistent information on holistic UN work in Somalia.  | X                 |                   |            |
|  |  | 37. Promote positive coverage: send out more positive stories.   | X                 |                   |            |
|  |  | 38. UN system Information/Promotion kit: create a common press kit to include fact sheets dedicated to the work of UNCT members covering the most important elements to their activities, as well as all communications focal points' contact details. It may also include brochures, stickers, roll-ups, etc. |                   |                   |            |
|  |  | 39. Produce joint press releases on key UN priority issues when appropriate.   | X                 |                   |            |
|  |  | 40. Update the UNCT Website (www.somalia-un.org) to provide access to individual agencies' sites and highlight holistic UN approach and collaborative activities.  | X                 |                   |            |
|  |  | 41. Develop op-eds and work with local editors to shape commentary on local and global UN priorities.  | X                 |                   |            |
|  |  | 42. Use goodwill ambassadors to raise Somalia profile and promote UN humanitarian, development and political work.   |                   |                   |            |
| 43. Improve crisis communications and management: in the event of a sudden-onset emergency –natural disasters, conflict, kidnappings, etc – the UNIG supports the IASC, the UNCT and/or official spokespeople, in managing the flow of information internally and externally (recruitment of a crisis communications expert not included). | X  |  |                   |                   |            |
| 44. Develop a kidnapping crisis' guidelines.   | X  |  |                   |                   |            |
| 45. Conceive a Frequently Asked Questions FAQ (clear statements endorsed by the UNCT on related sensitive issues).   | X  |  |                   |                   |            |
|  |  |  | \$25,000 annually |                   |            |

| Audience  | UN Messages   | UN Measures  | Resources        | Responsible Party | Time-frame |
|---|---|--|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| <b>Outcome 5: UN staff is adequately informed of UN activities and of their rights and obligations.</b>   |   |  |                  |                   |            |
| <b>UN staff</b>   | <p>"We are here to stay" - the UN remains engaged in Somalia.</p> <p>The humanitarian, development and political work are complementary. We all work towards peace, recovery and development in Somalia.</p> <p>Relocation does not mean that we are cutting down on staff.</p> <p>As UN employee, I have rights and obligations.</p> <p>We are all part of the bigger system - the UN family.</p> <p>Security: UN takes responsibility for everyone, all UN employees.</p> | 46. Hold regular meetings at the agency level.   | X                |                   |            |
|   |   | 47. Create a debate space to be open for all UNCT staff to discuss issues and help clarify misinformation or perceptions among ourselves, and topic lunch forums on common issues.   |                  |                   |            |
|   |   | 48. Establish regular informal events to bring staff together, such as monthly coffee breaks and breakfasts. A 'UN in Somalia' day might be an option. These informal events could also be announced through text messages sent to all staff.  |                  |                   |            |
|   |   | 49. Conduct/commission surveys of staff and stakeholders to determine their attitudes and behaviour on key issues including coherence.   |                  |                   |            |
|   |   | 50. Improvement of internal communications, through a regular RC/HC/DO letter to all staff, general staff meetings, seminars and briefings.  | X                |                   |            |
|   |   | 51. Organize regular staff meetings with videoconferencing for the staff in the field with RC/HC/DO and Nairobi staff.   |                  |                   |            |
|   |   | 52. UN internal celebration at least for the UN Day (24 October) gathering in the main UN offices and providing a speech from the highest UN authority to UN Staff.  |                  |                   |            |
|   |   | 53. Provision of assistance to smaller agencies without information capacity in order to profile their projects and improve positive coverage.   |                  |                   |            |
|   |   | 54. Creation of or otherwise update the calendar of media and public events (to be uploaded in the website or circulated in a monthly basis).  | X                |                   |            |
|   |   | 55. Training of UN information focal points and UN Representatives in various skill areas.   |                  |                   |            |
|   |   | 56. Regular meetings between information focal points (UNIG) and programme managers in order to promote key programme initiatives and present a coherent image of UN efforts in Somalia. Other UN staff may also be invited.   | X                |                   |            |
|   |   | 57. Attendance of appointed UNIG members to monthly meetings of the Inter-agency Programme Group, Operations Management Team and any other relevant meeting to ensure that communications elements also followed up if so decided and information sharing.                                 | X                |                   |            |
|   |   | 58. Improvement of internal information flows, in particular on security and development events/progress (once received by the respective Head of Agency, he/she is accountable for dissemination internally). The DSS security bulletin should be widely and regularly sent to all staff. | X                |                   |            |
|   |   | 59. Creation of UN focal point(s) to receive information from all staff in order to improve bottom-up information flows.   | X                |                   |            |
| 60. Develop a comprehensive UN induction package for new staff. Induction guidelines should be common to all agencies.  |   |  |                  |                   |            |
| 61. Raise awareness on rights and obligations of all UN's employees: distribute UN Charter's booklet, cards on code of conduct, etc. to emphasise the code of conduct and report of violations. |   |  |                  |                   |            |
| 62. Send all staff based in Nairobi to Somalia at least once.   | (X)   |  |                  |                   |            |
|   |   |  | \$10000 annually |                   |            |
|   |   | 63. Hire a full-time person to lead and monitor the implementation of the strategy and ensure the engagement and active participation of all UN Agencies.  |                  |                   |            |



***UN Communications Strategy:***

**Bringing coherence to UN internal and external communications  
to improve UN's profile in Somalia**

**TOTAL BUDGET (ANNUALLY)**

| <b><i>Area/targeted audience</i></b>   | <b><i>Budget</i></b> |
|--|----------------------|
| Somali public                          | \$20000              |
| Diaspora                               | \$10000              |
| Donors                                 | \$15000              |
| International media and general public | \$25000              |
| UN internal staff                      | \$10000              |
| <b>M&amp;E</b>                         | \$10000              |
| <b>Personnel</b>                       |                      |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>\$90000</b>       |