

















INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE Helsinki + Espoo, Finland 21 - 23 October, 2022

Youth, Women and Entrepreneurship Employment and Investment

BREAK THE BIAS

BREAK INEQUALITY

Conference Report
March 2023

About Global Somali Diaspora

Global Somali Diaspora (GSD) is a global not-for-profit organization working to bring together and mobilize members of the Somali Diaspora for positive action. GSD advocates and promotes the full integration of Somali Diaspora communities within their host nations while also remaining connected to their cultural heritage. GSD encourages the members of Somalia's international community to contribute to their homeland by promoting peacebuilding, reconciliation, reconstruction, and development efforts in Somalia.

Established in 2014, after participants convened in a conference in Istanbul, Turkey, today GSD has representatives from Somali communities around the world, including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark as well as other countries in Africa and Asia.

It is a foundational belief of GSD that a connected and unified Somali diaspora offers great opportunities to meet the challenges of their host countries, while also playing a strong and positive role in the rebuilding of Somalia.

Mission

GSD has been established to advocate, implement, and support projects, programs and initiatives that advance the cultural and social development of Somali diaspora communities, as well as make a positive contribution to the rebuilding of Somalia.

Vision

To holistically empower members of the Somali diaspora to realize their full potential while also empowering them to contribute to the building of harmonious, cohesive, educated, informed, creative, powerful, and prosperous communities both in their host nations and their homeland.

Objectives

GSD seeks to mobilize, organize, and empower Somali communities living in the diaspora. We want to provide a platform to improve communication and ties between members of the global Somali diaspora and serve as a focal point of action and advocacy on issues of importance to their communities. We will also promote the language, culture, and heritage of the Somali people, as well as enhance the capacity and skills of young Somalis living in Somalia and in the diaspora. Lastly, GSD aims to contribute greatly to the development and rebuilding of Somalia.

Global Somali Diaspora's International Conference, Helsinki 2022

Youth and Women, Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Investment: Break the Bias, Break Inequality

This year's conference topic has been inspired by the Somali Youth Diaspora's reflection on the challenges faced by Somali youth and women in the diaspora and homeland as well as the proposed partnerships work between GSD & SOMINVEST at the Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development of the Federal Government of Somalia in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Many studies have shown how women, youth, disabled people and marginalized clans face continuous challenges to accessing equal opportunities regarding the employment market and investment opportunities. Many international and local organisations have developed programmes to address these issues. However, challenges on the ground supersede what has been delivered so far and Somali-led initiatives are essential to explore appropriate and sustainable solutions which address current inequalities and social exclusions.

Therefore, this conference will focus on how to narrow this gap and widen access to equal opportunities in all mentioned areas for youth, women, and other disadvantaged groups within the community.



To achieve this, the conference focused on employment, entrepreneurship & investment, and the role of the Somali diaspora. The GSD's conference is aiming to fill the aforementioned gap by bringing together experts from different backgrounds that can contribute to a Somali-led initiative on

equality and social inclusion within our society including supporting the advancement of entrepreneurship and investment in partnership with SOMINVEST, Office of Somali Diaspora, private sector, non-governmental organisations, international communities as well as improving essential social services including but not limited to education, health, environment and addressing social-economic challenges.

Our Aims

To improve employment, entrepreneurship and investment prospects for disadvantaged youth, women and other marginalised people as well as strengthening partnerships between GSD, SOMINVEST, Office of Somali Diaspora and other key stakeholders to increase equal opportunities and social inclusion within Somali society and Somali diaspora engagement in investment.

Why Finland

As mentioned by the Finnish government in their four strategic goals for 2121 – 2024, Finland has a large Somali-Finnish diaspora who are active Finnish citizens in socio-economic, cultural and political areas in Finland as well as key contributors to the rebuilding of their homeland.

Additionally, the Finish government has been one of the key supporters of Somalia's peacebuilding and rehabilitation by hosting Somali refugees who fled from civil war and Finland's growing investment in development collaboration and awareness is feasible in Mogadishu, Somalia which has strengthened the connection between Finland and Somalia.

Finland recognises that Somalia is not only about the challenges but a country with great opportunities through its natural resources, strategic location and its young generation.

Therefore, trade between Finland and Somalia has increased recently with the improving security situation. Finnish companies have started to enter markets in Somalia through Finn-partnership, digitalisation and renewable energy may lead to business and investment opportunities in future. The Somali diaspora in Finland plays an active role in the commercial cooperation model developed by the Finnish Government. And as Finland aims to increase its trade with African countries there is a great opportunity to increase the trade and investment tie between the two countries.

Likewise, the themes chosen this year to align well with Finland's strategic priorities in gender equality and social inclusion as well as entrepreneurship and investment.

Therefore, to promote the Finnish-Somali diaspora role and acknowledge the Finish Government support to the Somali community and country, GSD has decided to hold its annual conference this year in Helsinki, Finland which is the first face-2-face international conference after the COVID-19 pandemic.



Benefit of Host Country

To advance and endorse this growing and mutual relationship, GSD would like to hold its largest international diasporic conference in Helsinki. That will further deepen this cooperation and business relationships between our two societies.

The GSD International conference in Finland will attract around 300 delegates consisting of Intellectuals, prominent academics, businesspeople, international and government officials, civil society and diaspora coming from all continents. This will put Finland on the spot-on international level and bring social, economic and cultural benefits to the country. Many Somali businesses will be attending the conference and could lead business investment in Helsinki and other cities in Finland. The hosting city will benefit from welcoming hundreds of international delegations that will promote the travel and tourism of the city and the overall country.

High-profile delegates from Somali Federal Government, European Union, the United States and United Nations will be invited which again will promote the profile of the country and it will strengthen further collaborative opportunities between the Finnish and Somali people.

Helsinki and Espoo

Helsinki is the capital city of Finland and sits across a series of islands in the country's southern region. The city boasts a youth buzz, with outdoor cafes, restaurants and an active nightlife. Since the 1980s, Helsinki has been home to a large number of Somali immigrants, some of whom are now proud Finnish citizens. Today the population of the Somali-Finnish community stands at roughly 20,000. This is two-thirds of all Somalis in the entire country of Finland.

Espoo is a municipality that lies 25 minutes from Helsinki's centre, it's part of Helsinki's Greater Metropolitan Area. It is the second most populous city in Finland after Helsinki. The area has five centres and is a hub of culture and business.



Sponsors and Funders

IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is part of the United Nations System as the leading inter-governmental organization promoting 1951 humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all, with 174 member states and a presence in over 100 countries.

IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all, with a presence in over 100 countries. IOM has been active in the East and Horn of Africa since the early 1980s.

DEVELOPMENT IN SOMALIA COMES FROM THE HEART

Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) is a capacity-building programme implemented by IOM to strengthen the institutional capacities of African governments to manage and realize their development goals through the transfer of knowledge, relevant skills and financial resources of African diaspora members. The MIDA initiative started in Somalia in 2008 with the first diaspora experts deployed in 2009.

The overall objective of the MIDA programme in Somalia is to strengthen the capacity of state institutions in key sectors to contribute towards achieving the goals stipulated in the National Development Plan of Somalia aligned to the Global Compact on Migration and the 2030 Development Agenda.

"Our mission is to assist in strengthening the capacities of the Federal and State Somali institutions through the transfer of relevant skills, knowledge and resources, with the support of Somali experts."





Sponsors and Funders

UK AID

UK Aid Direct is a £150 million programme which has changed the lives of over *9.5 million of the world's poorest people with UK aid from the UK Government.

Funded by the former Department for International Development (DFID), now Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), UK Aid Direct supports small and medium-sized civil society organisations (CSOs), based in the UK and overseas, to achieve sustained poverty reduction and to achieve the United Nations' Global Goals (opens in a new window).

Formerly known as the Global Poverty Action Fund (GPAF), the fund was relaunched in 2014 as UK Aid Direct. As a flexible fund, UK Aid Direct is adaptive and demand-led, responding to UK government priorities.





Sponsors and Funders

ASDA RY

ASDA RY is one of our local sponsors in Finland. The NGO promotes equality and good relations across many communities in the country.



Somali Finnish Network

The Somali Finish Network is an organisation based in Finland, founded by the local Somali community. They focus on peace and development in Somalia, as well as youth participation in Finland.



Hormuud Telecom

Hormuud Telecom is the Somalia-based telecommunications giant. It is the largest telecommunication company and largest private-sector employer in the country, and Somalia's first private enterprise to be internationally ISO certified. The company continues to support GSD's conferences, among its many philanthropic causes.



Transfer Galaxy

Transfer Galaxy is a money transfer company founded in Sweden and trusted by thousands for sending money overseas fast and securely. They were a kind sponsor of conference in Helsinki.



Somali-European Youth Forum

The Somali-European Youth Forum aim to make sure that all young people have the right to participate in democracy and become active citizens. This can be possible with better citizenship education, electoral reform and lowering the voting age.



Notable Key Speakers

Hamza Abdi Barre

Prime Minister of the Federal Government of Somalia.



Pekka Haavisto

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.



Jutta Urpilainen

EU Commissionner, International Partnerships



DAY ONE - Friday, 21st October 2022

Introductions

The day was hosted by Abderahim Hussein and Habiba Ali, two local members of the Somali diaspora in Helsinki.

The GSD's Chairperson Jawaahir Daahir who opened the conference acknowledged and thanked the Somali Diaspora in Finland for their hospitality, resourcefulness, proactiveness and their great role in planning and hosting the conference particularly GSD's representatives in Finland Nimco Noor, Abdifatah Jama from ASDA RY, Abdirahim Husu from Moniheli RY, and Somali Finnish Network.



Equally, Jawaahir thanked for GSD's conference sponsors specially IOM which was the key sponsor of the conference and all those who supported and contributed to the conference. Moreover, the Chair explained about the GSD's conference aims, sessions planned, and the outcomes expected from the conference.

As is tradition, the day's proceedings we kicked-off by recitation of the Quran, by Sharmarke Saciid Aw-Musse (Islamic Scholar).

The audience was treated to a video performance of Somali poet and artist Ifrah Mansour.

Afterwards there were welcoming words from by Councillor Dr Mohamed Jama, Social Democratic Party, City of Espoo.

Keynote Speakers

Somali Prime Minister, H.E. Hamza Abdi Barre (virtual)

They day's list of speakers started with virtual speech by the Prime Minister of Somalia, H.E. Mr Hamse Abdi Barre who officially opened the conference. The Prime Minister thanked the GSD Team for holding such an important conference. The Somali PM acknowledged the essential role the Somali diaspora plays in all aspects of Somalia's future developmental, economical, and humanitarian areas. The Prime Minister also urged the Somali Diaspora to provide additional support in the fight against terrorism, as well as financial help to the areas where the terrible droughts have affected.



Foreign Affairs Minister of Finland, Pekka Haavisto

Foreign Affairs Minister of Finland, Pekka Haavisto who sent a video message to the delegates has emphasized the importance of the Somali-Finnish Diaspora role in Finland and rebuilding Somalia. The Minister said the Finland government stands with and supports Somalia.



EU Commissionner, International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen (video message)

Honourable Jutta Urpalainen, EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, sent a message of greetings, praise, and encouragement to the Somali Diaspora Conference by video link.



The Honourable Somali-Finnish and Special Representative on Peace Mediation in the Horn of Africa, Said Ahmed Sultaan MP

Suldaan Said Ahmed, Somali-Finnish MP, the Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland and in charge of the peace and reconciliation of the Horn Africa was one of the guests of honour at the conference. He expressed his gratitude towards the conference after he spoke about peace and reconciliation tasks in the



Horn of Africa which he is involved and the different aspects of support that the Finland government provides to Somalia.

The Honourable Somali-Swedish, Mubarik Abdirahman MP

Mubarak Abdirahman, Somali-Swedish MP from the Sweden Parliament who attended the GSD's conference spoke about community cohesion and stated that a person can have different identities, and there is no problem with that, e.g. being a Somali, Swedish, African, or Muslim. He spoke about the importance of coming together as Somali diaspora and discussing issues concerning them.



Finish MP Inka Hopsu

MP Inka Hopsu, a member of the Finnish parliament who participated in the conference, talked about the plan of the Finnish government regarding the process of adaptation and the education system of the people who moved to Finland.



Councillor Dr Mohamed Jama, Social Democratic Party, City of Espoo

The conference delegates were welcomed by Councillor Dr Mohamed Jama, Social Democratic Party, City of Espoo as the host of the GSD's International Conference in Espoo, Finland



Honourable Governor of Central Bank of Somalia, Mr Abdirahman M Abdullahi (Virtual)

The Governor of the Central Bank of Somalia Abdirahman M. Abdullahi reported how the Central Bank of Somalia is committed to making Somalia a better place for investment. Likewise, the Governor informed the delegates of the conference that the Central Bank of Somalia gave licenses to 12 Money Transfer businesses and 13 private banks which all operate in Somalia. The system of money flow or the exchange between these banks which was not working before, is now working as shared by the Governor.



The Honourable IOM's Regional Director for East and Horn of Africa, Mohammed Abdiker

The Honorable IOM's Regional Director for East and Horn of Africa, Mohammed Abdiker and several members from IOM Team attended the GSD's international conference. Mr Mohammed Abdiker spoke about the key role of Somali diaspora in reviving Somalia's economic development and how IOM is supporting in this process by setting up programme that assist Somali diaspora in transferring their skills. Equally, Mr Abdiker explained about the impact of the current drought on the livelihood of Somali population and how IOM is supporting many affected areas. IOM



was one of the key sponsors of the conference and GSD is deeply grateful for their contribution both financially and their expertise on the conference's themes.

Entrepreneur Fadumo Ali, Founder of HOIWA Oy

Fadumo Ali who leads a company that provides social and health services called HOIWA Oy. This company which has only been a few years in existence has won multiple rewards, which all testify to the rapid development that the company has made in a short period of time and continuing.



Panels

1. Finnish-Somali diaspora, their contribution to the Finnish Society, homeland, opportunities, and their current challenges

Awa Ahmed, Coordinator for Development Cooperation, Somalia, Embassy of Finland in Nairobi, Anne Hammad, Project Manager, Unprotected Community Project, Deaconess Foundation, Liiban Sheekhdon, Project Coordinator, Multi Voices in Helsinki Project, City of Helsinki, Abdulle Mohamed, Divorced Families Project, and Councillor Dr Mohamed Jama, Social Democratic Party, City of Espoo discussed the Finnish-Somali diaspora, their contribution to the Finnish Society, homeland, opportunities, and their current challenges

2. Finnish-Somali diaspora, and their contribution to investing in livelihood of Somali nation.

Birgit Nevala, Programme Director, Finnpartnership, Ahmed Ibrahim, Vice-Chair of Somali Family Association of Lieksa and Entrepreneur, PSG Africa, Aden Hussein, Consultant in Developing Markets, and Ragge Yusuf, Somali European Youth Forum discussed the Finnish-Somali diaspora, and their contribution to investing in livelihood of Somali nation.

Closing Remarks

Nimco Noor

Nimco Noor who is the GSD's representative in Finland, and hosted this year's conference in collaboration with other organizations and the Somali Diaspora in Finland stated that she is pleased and feel honoured to hold the GSD's international conference in Finland this year, especially in the conference meetings of Espoo City Council.



DAY TWO - Saturday, 22nd October 2022

Introductions

The day began by a short introduction by the host Yusuf Noor, a delegate and member of the Somali diaspora in the United Kingdom. Followed by a recitation of the Quran by Ustad Mohamed Hassan. A welcome address was made by GSD's Vice-Chair, Ahmed Tohow.



Keynote Speakers

Said Sheikh Abdi, Senior Regional Strategic Advisor, Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa, International Organization for Migration (IOM)



Said Sheikh spoke about the Somali diaspora contribution in investing in livelihood of Somali nation affected by the droughts.

Alexandra Singpiel, DRC Representative, DEMAC Coordinator

Alexandra Singpiel, DEMAC Coordinator spoke eloquently about DEMAC's work in coordinating the diaspora efforts to response emergency situations in their homeland.



Anders Helge Knudsen, DRC representatives

Anders H Knudsen from Danish Refugee Council explained how remittances is supporting setting up businesses for Somali families in Jigjiga, Ethiopia and assisted by DRC.



Ahmed Darwish, Financial Trader, Investor, Author and Host of "Fikradaha Muhiimka Ah" Podcaster and Educator

Ahmed Darwish discussed the importance of finance and investment within the Somali community, and highlighted how crucial it is for Somali people to be more business-savvy. He also touched on topics, such intellectual property and branding.



Mustafe Osman Ibrahim, from Galaxy Transfer

Mustafe spoke about founding Galaxy transfer in 2015, and highlighted how the business has grown ever since. He encouraged the crowd to be more active in the business sector.



Panels

- A panel led by Ahmed Abdirahman Omar and including Anders Helge Knudsen and Bazi Sheikh discussed the Somali diaspora and their contribution to investing in livelihood of Somali nation affected by the droughts/floods.
- Dr Idil A Osman, Lecturer at Leicester University led a discussion on local Somali women social entrepreneurs; opportunities and challenges, addressing what women in business need in Somalia (in terms of business support). The panel consisted of Lul Salad Ibrahim, Abdinor Dahir, SOMINVEST – virtual, Amino Deeble – Business Owner and Sikhulile Dhlamini, Programme Manager (Labour Mobility and Human Development), IOM Somalia.



3. Abdirashid Fidow,
Operations
Manager of Anti
Tribalism
Movement led a
panel discussing
the role of media in
informing educating
the public about the
impact of these
agreements will
have on their day-



to-day life so that they feel ownership of the project.

4. Fadumo Ali led a panel discussion on Catalytic capital to empower and invest in women social entrepreneurs that will counter inequalities & respond to the climate crises and the state of social enterprises - challenges, threats,



opportunities, and lessons learnt in Africa. Panellists included Anders Helge Knudsen, DRC representatives, Abdirahman Bashir – World Bank -virtual and Sahra Mohamed, Entrepreneur and business owner.

DAY Three - Saturday, 23rd October 2022

Introductions

As usual, the day started with introductions by our host Maryan Abdulkarim, with Qur'an recitation by Ustad Abdifatah M Sayidali, with a welcome address by GSD's Board Member, Ali Ware.



Keynote Speakers

Said Faadi, CEO of Wadaagsan Company LLC

Said Faadi spoke about the Wadaagson Project taking place in Garacad seaport. A great example of an indigenous Somali company making progressive changes to the country's seafront. This project entails the construction of a port at Garacad coastal town. It will open up the central Somalia regions and eastern Ethiopia for easy trade with the outside world especially the gulf countries.



Guleed Ahmed, Somalitoons Founder



Guleed Ahmed spoke about his digital company, Somalitoons, which is an app that features cartoons for little children, with the voices being dubbed in Somali. The cartoons are a great way for little children, especially those in the diaspora, to take an interest in learning the Somali language.

Mahad Salad Abdi, Youth Wing Board Member of GSD

Mahad Salad Abdi spoke about his involvement with GSD, and how it's helped him connect with his Somali peers from across the world. He also spoke of how important it is for young people to get involved in organisations such as GSD.



Remarks by GSD Board Member Nimco Noor

Nimco Noor spoke about the advantages that Somalia has as a country, speaking about its vast coastland, and its opportunity to become a haven for fishing and sea farming. She also spoke about her life in Finland and the Somali community in Helsinki and Espoo.

Panels



- 1. Fauzia Mohamed Hashi, Refugees Consultant and Family Adviser led a panel discussed leadership and entrepreneurship among youth and women, and the biases against them. They also spoke about the reluctance of our youth in taking up technical jobs, like fishing, and how it's important for us to encourage our youth to have strong work ethics and be proud of working for what they aim to achieve. Panellists included Lul Salad Ibrahim, Amal Mohamed and Abdikarim Shire Mohamed.
- 2. Natasha Jolob, Director of Kai-zen Global, Social Enterprise Adviser, led a panel on Impact investor/ funders, and how to build a road map to investing in the Horn of Africa. The Panellists included Abdinor Dahir, Senior Adviser of SOMINVEST, Abdirizak Awel Mohamed, Entrepreneur and owner of First Cup Coffee and Tea, and Hamdi Sheikh, GSD's Board Member

Closing Remarks by Chair of GSD

Closing remarks were made by our distinguished Chair, Jawaahir Daahir, MBE. She spoke highly of the contributions delegates had made to the conference and thanked them for taking part in the special event. She highlighted how she saw that participants were all engaged and interested in a bright future for Somali peoples, both in the diaspora and at home.

The event was then closed by Chair, as he handed out awards for those who made the event possible.

Entertainment

Somali Cultural Night Hosted by Somali Finnish Network

On the last evening of the conference, all delegates were invited to a night of social activities, including food, drinks, and live Somali music. The event was organised by the Somali Finnish network and was also attended by the wider Somali community in Helsinki. During the celebrations, awards were given out to key members of the Global Somali Diaspora board, as well the Somali Finish Network, and they both

partnered to produce the conference.





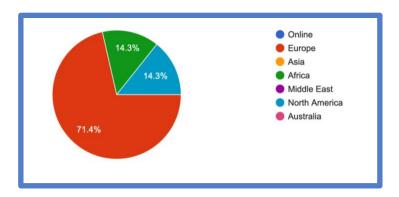




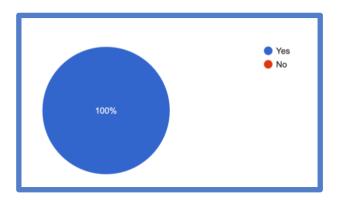
Feedback from Participants

After the event, we sent out questionnaire for delegates and participants, so that they can tell us about their experiences of the conference. An overwhelming amount of the correspondence was positive. The participants were very interested and engaged in the conference, and they were looking forward to the next event. Below are some of the responses we have received:

When asked about where to hold the next conference:



When asked if they would recommend the conference to other:



Quotes from Participants

"It is important to talk with other diaspora since the issues that are being discussed are diaspora issues. Eg, investment, knowledge-sharing, and transfer skills to their home. I think we should all participate in the GSD meeting."

"I met great people, learned a lot from the conference."

"It is important to have a conference like this, it gives you information, and you can connect with other organizations - I recommend."

Summary

- It is evident from this report that the Global Somali Diaspora, as an
 organisation, and as a people have made grounds in far reaching countries
 around the world, and the pressing concern of their homeland is one of their
 primary concerns. They are taking steps in the right direction to address these
 issues by building relationships between Somali and their host countries, as it
 is evidenced by the relationship between the Somali communality and fellow
 Finnish nationals.
- The youth in Somalia need to be encouraged in taking up employment and being solid benefit to their country. We as a diaspora have the responsibility to build these values into our children and invest in their wellbeing, through investment efforts to the country.
- Similar can be said of women in the country, as their counterparts, Somali
 women in the diaspora, are doing incredibly well in the global stage, and it is
 important to enrich our young women and girls in the values of hard work.
 This is essential in combatting the gender parity in Somalia and cultivating a
 truly equal society.
- The participants in the conference all shared their experiences of working with the Somali diaspora, and how well they are able to contribute to the growing crises occurring the country, from famine, drought, and other economic issues, while also highlighting positive outcomes in the worlds of business and entrepreneurship through the country.



Message from Chair



The main aim of the conference was to bring together the leading Somali diaspora in business and investment sectors, academics, researchers, technocrats, practitioners, and other key stakeholders to exchange and share their expertise and experiences on all aspects of investment, entrepreneurship and employment issues within our community and homeland.

It was also meant to provide a platform to present and discuss the most recent innovations, trends, and concerns as well as everyday challenges faced, and solutions adopted in the conference theme.

The report highlights the three-day conference programme of presentations and keynote addresses as well as panel discussions, which took place from the 21st to 23rd October 2022 in Finland. The GSD conference brought together over 150 delegates around the world including key government officials nationally and internationally, Somali diaspora entrepreneurs, academics, civil societies, youth and other key stakeholders to discuss and explore opportunities to invest in our youth, women and homeland with focus on sustainability.

It concluded with a set of recommendations as part of the solutions suggested and important initiatives appropriate to the conference theme.

GSD will be developing an action plan to follow up with the key recommendations and it will present the outcomes to the next GSD's international conference.

Equally, GSD is planning the celebration of its 10th inauguration in 2024. For more information get in touch with us.

Jawaahir Daahir, MBE, Chair of Global Somali Diaspora

GSD Board of Directors







AHMED TOHOW – VICE CHAIR



BAZI BUSSURI SHEIKH



ALI WAARE



H.E. JIBRIL AFYARE.



NIMCO NOOR



DR SUAD MOHAMED



HAMDI SHEIKH





MANDEKH HUSSEIN



KADRA YUSUF



MAHAD SALAD ABDI



SAMIRA ALI

Sponsors and supporters















