

# Brief on the Population Estimation Survey in Somalia

Somalia's first nation-wide data collection, since 1975

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*“Numbers tell us about people. This Population Estimation Survey will provide critical data to guide plans, policies and programmes to meet the Somali people’s need and improve their lives”*  
UNFPA Representative,  
Cheikh T. Cisse

## The PESS main survey is just around the corner!

It was in June 2012 that UNFPA took the lead to organize Population Estimation Survey of Somalia (PESS) following a request from the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). The PESS was seen as a first important step and as an instrument to enhance statistical capacities inside Somalia and provide soundly accurate, reliable, credible and accepted indicators for more specific follow-up surveys. It would be ideal to conduct a comprehensive population census for Somalia. Considering that a comprehensive census would require formidable institutional, financial and technical resources that are lacking as well as unreliable security and stability in central and southern parts of Somalia. Hence, a population survey complemented by mapping and estimation procedures would most practically serve the need for population data.

### The partnerships that made it happen:

The \$6.9 USD PESS survey, funded by contributions by UN agencies, DfID, EU, DANIDA, SIDA and the African Development Bank enjoys a wide support from government authorities, UN agencies, the NGO community and donors who have pledged more commitment and have already made their expertise available. The survey covers the entire Somalia based on the boundaries of the 18 regions as they existed before the war in 1991 and all IDP settlements currently hosting families. It is hoped the outcome will provide a reliable population estimate disaggregated by regions, districts, urban, rural, and nomadic populations, etc.

In rural areas, the preparations are being conducted in two stages. Stage 1 was an initial visit to the district capitals to update lists of rural settlements, mainly through contact with the local authorities (district commissioners) and local chiefs and elders.

### Results:

- Sampling for the main survey was carried out and the draft sampling plan is currently discussed underway with zonal survey teams. Sample of water points is included to estimate the size of the nomadic population, bringing the critical mapping and cartography ground works to completion and readying the areas for the main survey.
- The draft sampling plan is in the process of being validated in close collaboration with the zonal teams.
- Technical support provided by sister UN agencies such as UNICEF, FAO, WFP, UNDP has proved extremely valuable and was extended to include the positioning of a technical team from UNDP.
- ◆ PESS brought together the Somali authorities of the three zones which led to them coming to a consensus to utilize the outcomes of the survey for future economic and social development purposes.
- ◆ The strong daily support and commitment demonstrated at all tiers of governance for PESS was laudable and ensured that challenges were fully and timely addressed.

*“Training is one of many steps in the complex process of data collection.”*



"If you can't measure it,  
you can't manage it."

Measuring the Change in World  
Poverty, PARIS 21



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## Capacity Building

- Intensive trainings aimed at enhancing the capabilities and efficiency of stakeholder institutions, staff and field interviewers was completed ahead as schedule; helping to speed up the implementation process.
- Ever since the inception of PESS and its leading role in implementing the process, UNFPA has stressed the indispensability of partnership between UN agencies and relevant authorities of the Transitional Federal government of Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland through each phase of the work. The objective is to ensure full, meaningful and accountable involvement in the process and ownership of the results by national authorities.

## More pledge of support from current and new partners

- UNFPA is pleased to announce that US Government, one of our strongest partners supporting our programs in Somalia and elsewhere, has reiterated its willingness to continue supplying PESS with the necessary satellite imagery for UNFPA. The pledge could not have come at a better time when UNFPA is preparing to engage massive resources to conduct the PESS survey in Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland.
- ◆ The Norwegian Government, through Statistics Norway, has also made an offer to provide technical expertise in a series of technical missions for the analysis of the PESS data and incorporate its feed in the mid-term statistical capacity development plan for Somalia.

## UNFPA calls on more development partners to join hands on PESS

PESS (Population Estimation Survey of Somalia) has began with the earnest support of our partners and what has been achieved so far exceeded expectations both in terms of quality and time frame it took to complete the tasks. Though UNFPA remains exceptionally thankful for the technical and financial support it solicited to this point from partners for the project, it would like to seize this solid milestone in the project's cycle to call for more direct and indirect assistance to capitalize on the gains and ensure a smooth completion.

More resources need to be mobilized to staff, train and equip personnel, finance logistics over a massive geographic space, fund partnerships, planning, monitoring and human resources, and support capacity building programs, advocacy and quality assurance on phase by phase and simultaneous basis. The financial requirements needed for these tasks are by no means small and need to be garnered from a multitude of sources. UNFPA would like to kindly call on our donors to pledge your support to help us meet the financial requirements and make the PESS survey a complete success.