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## MIDA Health

### Strengthening the Health Sector in Somaliland and Puntland through the Engagement of Somali Diaspora Health Professionals from Finland

#### Summary

Through this project, IOM supports the development of the health sector in Somaliland and Puntland by strengthening the human resource base of the regions' public and private health-care institutions. Working with a comprehensive range of stakeholders, and the IOM office in Hargeisa, the project identifies essential gaps in the regions' health sectors that can be filled temporarily by health professionals from the Finland-based Somali Diaspora.

In the framework of the project, up to twenty-two highly qualified professionals of Somali background will return on a temporary basis to Somaliland and Puntland to assist and share competences with local health authorities, civil society organizations (CSOs), hospitals and universities in fields identified in coordination with all relevant partners. During the last month of the project, a Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) conference will be organized in Helsinki to share experiences, lessons learned, and formulate recommendations for future MIDA projects in the Horn of Africa.

The **MIDA Health** project places special emphasis on targeting female health professionals in the Somali Diaspora and identifying gender-based gaps in the provision of health services in Somaliland and Puntland.



IOM International Organization for Migration

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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental body, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration, and work towards effective respect of the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

## Background

The health sector in Somaliland and Puntland is under severe pressure due to a dearth of qualified health professionals, inadequate infrastructure, and a chronic inavailability of crucial financial and other resources. Somalia's civil war and continued conflict has led to the massive brain drain of most of the country's qualified professionals, including medical doctors and nurses, putting a tremendous burden on those health sector workers who have remained in the country. Furthermore, the influx of internally displaced persons from across the country, refugees and irregular migrants from the Greater Horn of Africa have also increased pressure on the regions' health sector.

IOM's MIDA framework was initiated in 2001 as a capacity-building programme that helps to mobilize competencies acquired by African nationals abroad for the benefit of Africa's development. The framework aims to strengthen IOM's capacity-building efforts in assisting African countries to achieve their development goals through the creation and reinforcement of sustainable links between the Diaspora and their countries of origin.

The IOM Regional Office in Helsinki has developed this MIDA Health project for Somaliland and Puntland in close cooperation with Somali healthcare professionals residing and working in Finland. A number of members of the Finland section of the Association of Somali Healthcare Professionals in the Nordic Countries have shown great interest in temporarily returning to their country of origin, including Puntland and Somaliland, in order to help alleviate the direct strains on the country's health sector and train local health staff in their respective fields of expertise.



## Objective

The project's overall objective is to strengthen the capacities of local health sector professionals in Somaliland and Puntland through the transfer of skills and knowledge acquired abroad by qualified and highly qualified health professionals from the Finland-based Somali diaspora, thereby contributing to the reconstruction and capacity building of the human resource base of regions' health sector.

## Project Activities

The project will include the following components:

- Identification of essential gaps in the health sector in Somaliland and Puntland;
- Identification of available skills among the Finland-based Somali health professionals and setting up of a skills database;
- Temporary assignments for up to 22 health professionals;
- MIDA Conference in Helsinki / Finland;
- MIDA Health Somaliland-Puntland – Project Experiences and Lessons Learned (Publication).

## Requirements for Participation

The general conditions for participating in the MIDA Health project are:

- Somali background or nationality;
- Finnish citizenship or permanent residence in Finland;
- University degree in health care or a related field;
- 3 to 5 years of professional work experience,
- Good communication skills and a vocation to teach;
- Interest in humanitarian activities;
- Willingness to uphold IOM's Standards of Conduct;
- Membership in the Association of Somali Healthcare Professionals in the Nordic Countries (Finland section) is considered a valuable asset.

## Donor

The project is fully funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (Department for Africa and the Middle East).

## Duration

The project will be implemented over a period of twelve months.

## Project Partners

- Association of Somali Healthcare Professionals in the Nordic Countries
- FinnChurchAid (Kirkon Ulkomaanapu - KUA)
- Somali Diaspora in Finland
- Local authorities, medical institutions, universities and NGOs in Somaliland and Puntland to be identified during the first phase of the project