

Speech Draft *Transforming Somalia's Housing Deficit into Opportunity*

Opening Statement: Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, partners, and friends, Imagine a nation where nearly one in five people is displaced living in fragile shelters, without secure land, water, or power yet carrying within them a powerful determination to rebuild. That is Somalia's story. It is a story of displacement, yes but also of resilience, ingenuity, and transformation.

Today, I want to share how Somalia is turning one of the most severe housing crises in Africa into an engine for inclusive growth through public-private partnerships, institutional reforms, and urban resilience programs embedded in our National Transformation Plan and Durable Solutions Strategy.

The Challenge : Somalia faces a housing deficit affecting more than three million internally displaced people. Our cities from Mogadishu to Baidoa, Kismayo to Garowe are absorbing thousands of new residents every month. Rapid urbanization of over 4% per year, land tenure insecurity, and climate shocks are combining to create a structural, not temporary, crisis. In many settlements, families live without legal land rights or access to finance. Humanitarian shelters were never meant to last for years, yet many have become semi-permanent neighborhoods vulnerable to floods, fire. This is why we realized: housing cannot be treated as charity. It must be treated as infrastructure as a foundation for peace, security, and nation-building.

Strategic Interventions of The Government

1. **Institutional and Policy Reforms:** Our first priority has been to rebuild the institutional foundation. Through the National Housing Policy and the Durable Solutions Strategy, Somalia has begun to define a national vision for housing that connects humanitarian response to long-term development. We are reforming our land administration systems, establishing urban governance frameworks that clarify land ownership, and creating municipal planning tools that enable predictable, transparent urban growth. In short, we are moving from *ad-hoc shelter delivery* to *evidence-based, planned urban development*.
2. **Public–Private Partnerships and Innovative Financing:** The second pillar is to unlock capital and expertise through partnership. We are introducing Public-Private Partnership guidelines that enable investors and developers to work with government in delivering affordable and climate-resilient housing. And we are engaging our diaspora investors among the most dynamic in Africa to channel remittances into structured, bankable housing projects.
3. **Integrated Urban Resilience and Durable Solutions :** The third pillar focuses on linking housing to resilience. With support from partners like the World Bank, UN-Habitat, we are implementing multi-sectoral urban resilience programs integrating housing, infrastructure, livelihoods, and climate adaptation. Our

Building Urban Resilience to Climate Change Project is piloting new models of settlement upgrading in cities like Baidoa and Kismayo where displaced families are gaining secure tenure, access to basic services, and new livelihood opportunities. Urban master plans in Mogadishu, Garowe, and other cities are embedding affordable housing within climate-smart and inclusive urban layouts. Every house we build is not just a roof it is a *unit of peace*, a *unit of stability*, and a *unit of resilience*.

Impact: We are beginning to see impact: More than 20,000 households have received tenure security and improved shelter through community-led upgrading. Five major cities now integrate housing into their urban resilience frameworks. And, crucially, inter-ministerial coordination between Public Works, Finance, and Environment is now institutionalized, bridging policy and implementation. Private developers are showing growing interest in pilot PPP housing sites in Mogadishu and Baidoa. The momentum is real and it's African.

Closing Remark: Excellencies, colleagues Somalia's journey is about ownership, partnership, and dignity. We are not seeking charity, we are seeking collaboration. We invite UN Habitat, African development banks, private investors, and our continental partners to join us in transforming displacement into development. Because when a displaced family receives a key to a safe home they are not just moving into shelter; they are moving into citizenship, stability, and hope. Housing is not a cost it is a nation-building investment. And in Somalia, we are proving that even in the toughest environments, transformation is not only possible it is already underway.

Key Question: How can Somalia and partners align housing policy with displacement and resilience agendas to address urban informality comprehensively?

Key Questions: What innovative housing finance instruments can be adapted for fragile and post-conflict contexts? How can the UN-Habitat and partners support the creation of regional housing funds or credit guarantee schemes for affordable housing/ Social Housing?

Key Questions: How can regional cooperation enhance policy harmonization and knowledge sharing on urban governance and housing regulation? What institutional mechanisms are most effective for integrating social housing policy with fiscal federalism in fragile states?

Key Questions: How can African governments leverage green financing to scale up climate-resilient housing for vulnerable populations? What role can UN Habitat and development banks play in mainstreaming resilience criteria in social housing investment frameworks?

Key Question: How can the UN-habitat platform strengthen multi-level partnerships to accelerate housing delivery in fragile and post-conflict member states like Somalia?

Key Question : How can we connect local governance and social housing?.

Abdi Hamud Ahmed

**Senior Advisor of The Somalia Federal Ministry of Public Work,
Reconstruction, Housing, Land and Urban Development**