



Report for Discussion

on the Role of Parliament
in Strengthening Good
Governance and Citizen
Participation

Date: 29th April 2026

**Held on Hayat Hotel-
Hargeisa, Somaliland**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The discussion on “*The Role of Parliament in Strengthening Good Governance and Citizen Participation in Somaliland*” was conducted as an interactive one-day forum bringing together 15 participants from government institutions, civil society organizations, academia, scholars, and emerging leaders. The session aimed to enhance understanding of parliamentary functions and explore ways to strengthen democratic governance and citizen engagement.

The facilitator delivered a comprehensive presentation outlining the three core functions of parliament: legislation, oversight, and representation. Participants were guided through how parliament develops laws, monitors government activities, and represents citizens in decision-making processes. This provided a strong foundation for an in-depth and practical discussion.

During the discussion, participants reflected on the effectiveness of parliamentary performance in Somaliland. Key issues raised included weak oversight mechanisms, limited citizen engagement, and gaps in representation. Participants emphasized that parliamentary processes should be more inclusive, transparent, and responsive to public needs. They also highlighted the importance of strengthening communication between Members of Parliament and their constituencies.

The session generated practical recommendations focused on improving participatory law-making, strengthening oversight systems, and enhancing representation through continuous citizen engagement.

Participants further stressed the need for civic education, capacity building for MPs, and stronger collaboration between parliament, civil society, and other stakeholders.

Overall, the discussion session successfully achieved its objective by creating an open platform for dialogue, critical reflection, and knowledge sharing. It concluded with a shared understanding of the need to strengthen parliamentary institutions to promote accountability, transparency, and meaningful citizen participation in Somaliland's governance system.

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The DAWLAD-KAAB (Strengthening Inclusive Governance) project is an initiative to promote accountable, transparent, and participatory governance in Somaliland. The project is designed in response to the growing need to strengthen the relationship between public institutions particularly parliament and citizens, ensuring that governance processes are inclusive and responsive to public needs.

In many contexts, gaps remain between policymakers and the communities they serve, often limiting citizen engagement in decision-making processes. This can weaken accountability mechanisms and reduce public trust in institutions. DAWLAD-KAAB aims to address these challenges by creating platforms for dialogue, strengthening parliamentary oversight, and enhancing citizen participation in governance.

The project also contributes to raising awareness on key governance issues, promoting inclusive policy dialogue, and supporting evidence-based decision-making.

By fostering collaboration and open communication between stakeholders, DAWLAD-KAAB seeks to build trust, improve accountability, and strengthen democratic practices. Ultimately, the DAWLAD-KAAB project aims to contribute to a more inclusive governance system where citizens' voices are heard, public institutions are responsive, and policies reflect the priorities and needs of the wider community.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS:

The Gole watch platform organized a one-day discussion forum aimed at examining and strengthening the role of parliament in promoting good governance and enhancing citizen participation in Somaliland.

The forum convened 15 participants representing a diverse range of stakeholder groups, including government officials, members of parliament, civil society organizations, public institutions, scholars, activists, and emerging leaders. This inclusive composition facilitated meaningful dialogue, fostered knowledge exchange, and ensured the incorporation of multiple perspectives on governance challenges and opportunities.

Discussions centered on key thematic areas, including parliamentary oversight, accountability, transparency, and mechanisms for enhancing citizen engagement in decision-making processes.

Participants actively shared experiences, identified critical gaps, and developed practical recommendations to strengthen the relationship between parliament and the public.

The session was conducted using a participatory approach, promoting open dialogue, structured group discussions, and reflective engagement. It further served as a platform to enhance collaboration, build mutual understanding, and encourage constructive engagement among stakeholders.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

The overall objective is to strengthen the role of parliament in promoting good governance and enhancing citizen participation in Somaliland through inclusive dialogue, knowledge sharing, and the development of practical recommendations.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

- To strengthen Parliament's oversight role in ensuring accountability, transparency, and proper use of public resources.

- To enhance Parliament's capacity in law-making processes that promote good governance and rule of law.
- To improve Parliament's role in budget scrutiny and monitoring public expenditure for effective service delivery.
- To strengthen the link between Parliament and citizens to ensure effective representation of public interests.
- To promote citizen participation in parliamentary processes and decision-making in Somaliland.
- To identify challenges affecting Parliament's effectiveness in promoting good governance and propose practical solutions



DURATION

The event was conducted over a one-day period on Wednesday, 29 April 2026, at Hayat Hotel in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

PARTICIPANTS:

The event was attended by 15 participants representing a broad range of stakeholder groups, including scholars, academics, representatives of governance institutions, civil society organizations, and emerging leaders.

The participants actively engaged in the discussion on ***The Role of Parliament in Strengthening Good Governance and Citizen Participation***, contributing valuable insights and practical experiences on key issues such as parliamentary oversight, accountability, transparency, and citizen engagement. Their participation significantly enriched the dialogue and facilitated a constructive exchange of ideas aimed at strengthening good governance and democratic processes in Somaliland.

OUTCOME OF THE DISCUSSION

The discussion generated meaningful insights and practical recommendations on strengthening the role of parliament in promoting good governance and enhancing citizen participation in Somaliland.

Participants reached a shared understanding on the importance of improving parliamentary oversight, accountability, and transparency as key pillars of effective governance. The event highlighted the need for stronger engagement mechanisms between parliament and citizens to ensure that public concerns are adequately reflected in decision-making processes.

Participants emphasized the importance of regular public consultations, increased access to parliamentary information, and the strengthening of institutional capacities to support open and responsive governance.

Furthermore, the discussion fostered enhanced collaboration among stakeholders, including government institutions, civil society, and emerging leaders, reinforcing the value of inclusive dialogue in addressing governance challenges.

The key recommendations produced from the session are expected to inform future initiatives aimed at improving democratic governance and citizen participation in Somaliland.

THE OPENING REMARKS

The opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Abdiqadir, Project Manager, who formally welcomed all participants to the discussion forum on ***“The Role of Parliament in Strengthening Good Governance and Citizen Participation.”*** He expressed sincere appreciation to all attendees for their presence and their commitment to engaging in a constructive dialogue on key governance issues in Somaliland.

Mr. Abdiqadir extended his gratitude to the diverse group of participants, including representatives from government institutions, civil society organizations, academia, and emerging leaders, for their valuable contributions to the forum. He emphasized that their participation reflected a shared commitment to strengthening democratic governance, accountability, and inclusive decision-making processes.

He further provided an overview of the project, highlighting its focus on promoting good governance through research, dialogue, and multi-stakeholder engagement.

He explained that the purpose of the forum was to explore practical ways of strengthening the role of parliament, particularly in relation to oversight, accountability, transparency, and citizen participation in governance processes.

In conclusion, Abdiqadir encouraged participants to engage actively and openly throughout the discussions, noting that the insights, experiences, and recommendations generated from the forum would contribute to strengthening the relationship between parliament and citizens, as well as supporting broader governance reforms in Somaliland.

METHODOLOGY

The discussion event was conducted using a participatory and interactive methodology designed to encourage open dialogue and meaningful engagement among participants.

The session combined a brief introductory presentation with facilitated group discussions to guide the overall process. The forum began with opening remarks and an overview of the objectives, followed by a moderated plenary discussion on the theme **“The Role of Parliament in Strengthening Good Governance and Citizen Participation.”** Participants were then encouraged to actively share their experiences, perspectives, and insights on key governance issues, including parliamentary oversight, accountability, transparency, and citizen engagement.



The discussion sessions were structured to allow for open exchange of ideas, ensuring that all participants had the opportunity to contribute. The facilitator guided the conversation to maintain focus on the key themes while encouraging critical reflection and constructive dialogue. This approach enabled a collaborative learning environment and ensured that the outcomes of the discussion were informed by diverse viewpoints and practical experiences from all stakeholder groups.

PRESENTATION SESSIONS

The facilitator conducted a comprehensive presentation session on the theme ***“The Role of Parliament in Strengthening Good Governance and Citizen Participation in Somaliland.”*** The purpose of the session was to deepen participants' understanding of the constitutional mandate of parliament and its contribution to promoting accountability, transparency, and inclusive governance processes.

The facilitator explained that parliament is the principal law-making body responsible for drafting, debating, amending, and approving national legislation. This role ensures that laws are developed in line with public needs, national priorities, and principles of justice and equality, thereby forming the foundation for good governance, social stability, and sustainable development.

It was also highlighted that parliament has a key oversight function over the executive branch of government. This includes reviewing government policies, questioning ministers, examining public expenditures, and ensuring the proper and transparent use of public resources.

The facilitator emphasized that this oversight role is essential for strengthening accountability and preventing misuse of power within government institutions. In addition, the facilitator explained that parliament serves as the representative body of the people. Members of parliament act as a bridge between citizens and the government by conveying public concerns, needs, and aspirations into national decision-making processes.

This representation function ensures that governance remains inclusive, participatory, and responsive to citizens. Following the presentation, an interactive and participatory discussion session was conducted to further enhance participants' understanding of the topic.

Participants actively engaged in open dialogue, sharing experiences, raising questions, and reflecting on how parliamentary roles are practiced in Somaliland. Key issues raised included limited citizen engagement in parliamentary processes, challenges in effective oversight, and the need to strengthen institutional capacity.

The facilitator ensured an inclusive and structured discussion, allowing all participants from government institutions, civil society, academia, and emerging leadership groups to contribute meaningfully.

The session encouraged knowledge sharing, critical reflection, and constructive exchange of ideas. The presentation and discussion session strengthened participants' understanding of the role of parliament in promoting good governance and citizen participation. It also provided practical insights and recommendations to support parliamentary strengthening and democratic development in Somaliland.



SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION RESULTS

Following the facilitator's presentation on "***The Role of Parliament in Strengthening Good Governance and Citizen Participation in Somaliland,***" participants engaged in an extensive and highly interactive discussion that reflected a wide range of views from scholars, civil society representatives, government officials, and emerging leaders. The discussion focused on the effectiveness of parliament in fulfilling its core functions of legislation, oversight, and representation, as well as the broader challenges affecting citizen participation in governance.

A major area of discussion centered on the **oversight role of parliament**. Participants expressed concern that parliamentary supervision over the executive branch remains weak and inconsistent. Several participants noted that oversight mechanisms are not being fully utilized to ensure government accountability and transparency.

One participant stated that "*government accountability is still very limited because parliament does not consistently follow up on decisions or monitor implementation effectively.*" This concern was echoed by others who emphasized that stronger oversight is essential for ensuring proper use of public resources and improving service delivery.

Another participant further argued that "*in many cases, parliament appears reactive rather than proactive in its supervisory role,*" highlighting the need for more structured monitoring systems, regular questioning of government officials, and stronger enforcement of accountability measures.

The discussion underscored that without effective oversight, public trust in governance institutions is likely to remain weak.

The **legislative (law-making) role** of parliament was also critically examined. Participants acknowledged that while parliament is constitutionally mandated to make laws, the process is often perceived as insufficiently inclusive.

Some participants noted that laws are sometimes developed without meaningful public consultation, limiting their relevance to community needs. One participant expressed that "*laws are often discussed within institutions, but the voices of ordinary citizens are not fully reflected in the process.*" This raised concerns about the degree to which legislation reflects the lived realities of the population.

Participants recommended that law-making processes should be more participatory, involving civil society organizations, professional groups, and community representatives to ensure that legislation is both responsive and practical. It was emphasized that inclusive law-making is essential for strengthening legitimacy and public confidence in parliamentary decisions.

A significant portion of the discussion focused on the **representation role of parliament**, which generated strong and sometimes critical feedback from participants. Some participants expressed serious concerns about the disconnect between Members of Parliament and the citizens they represent.

One participant stated that *“there is a sense of zero representation in some areas, as citizens feel their voices are not reaching parliament effectively.”* This statement sparked further discussion on the need to strengthen constituency engagement and improve communication between elected representatives and the public.

Another participant added that *“representation is weak when citizens only hear from their MPs during elections,”* highlighting the perception that engagement is limited to electoral periods rather than being continuous. These concerns reflected a broader sentiment that parliamentary representation needs to be more visible, accessible, and responsive to citizens’ needs on an ongoing basis.

The discussion also identified several **structural and institutional challenges** affecting parliamentary effectiveness. Participants pointed to limited institutional capacity, insufficient research and technical support for MPs, and weak mechanisms for public participation as key barriers. Additionally, low public awareness of parliamentary roles was highlighted as a contributing factor to the gap between parliament and citizens.

One participant noted that *“many citizens do not fully understand what parliament is supposed to do, which creates unrealistic expectations and weak engagement.”* This observation led to recommendations for strengthening civic education and public awareness programs to improve understanding of parliamentary functions.

Despite the critical perspectives raised, the discussion also generated constructive solutions and forward-looking recommendations. Participants emphasized the need for strengthening parliamentary committees, improving transparency in legislative processes, and institutionalizing regular public consultation forums. It was also suggested that collaboration between parliament, civil society organizations, and academic institutions should be enhanced to support evidence-based decision-making.

Furthermore, participants recommended establishing more structured platforms for citizen engagement, including town hall meetings, public hearings, and digital communication channels to bridge the gap between parliament and the public. Strengthening media engagement was also highlighted as an important tool for improving transparency and public awareness.

The discussion reflected both critical assessments and practical recommendations regarding the role of parliament in Somaliland.

While participants acknowledged the importance of parliament in promoting good governance, they also highlighted significant gaps in representation, oversight, and citizen engagement.

The strong statements, including concerns about *“zero representation”* and weak oversight, underscored the urgency of institutional reforms.

In conclusion, the session produced a clear consensus that strengthening parliamentary accountability, enhancing citizen representation, and improving inclusive law-making processes are essential for advancing democratic governance in Somaliland.

The outcomes of the discussion provide valuable and actionable insights for future reforms aimed at bridging the gap between parliament and citizens and improving overall governance effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The session concluded on a highly positive and constructive note, with participants expressing appreciation for the opportunity to engage in an open and meaningful dialogue on the role of parliament in strengthening good governance and citizen participation in Somaliland.

The interactive nature of the discussion allowed for active engagement, knowledge sharing, and the exchange of diverse perspectives from all participants.

The facilitator effectively summarized the key points raised during the session, particularly on the importance of strengthening parliamentary functions in legislation, oversight, and representation. Participants acknowledged that the discussion helped to deepen their understanding of parliamentary roles and the existing gaps that need to be addressed to improve governance systems.

The session ended successfully, with participants agreeing on the importance of continued dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders. The atmosphere remained engaging and participatory until the end, reflecting a strong interest in advancing democratic governance and enhancing citizen involvement in decision-making processes in Somaliland.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Legislative (Law-Making) Role:** Strengthen inclusive and participatory law-making processes by ensuring broader consultation with citizens, civil society organizations, academics, and technical experts. Parliament should conduct regular public hearings and stakeholder engagement sessions to ensure that laws are practical, responsive, and aligned with the real needs of the population.
- **Oversight Role:** Enhance parliamentary oversight by establishing stronger monitoring and follow-up mechanisms on government policies, programs, and public expenditures. Parliament should actively question and review executive actions, strengthen committee systems, and ensure timely reporting and accountability from government institutions to prevent misuse of public resources.
- **Representation Role:** Improve the representation function of parliament by strengthening continuous engagement between Members of Parliament and their constituencies beyond election periods. MPs should hold regular community meetings, improve communication channels, and establish structured feedback systems to ensure citizens' voices are effectively captured and reflected in national decision-making processes.



GOLE WATCH

Gole watch is a parliament monitoring initiative in Somaliland that bridges the gap between the parliament and citizens by providing accurate and visualized information.



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