Topic: Access to Education for Women and Girls, Foreign Direct Investment, and Promoting Integrity and Transparency in Government

Country: Federal Republic of Somalia

Committee: General Assembly, African Union

Three issues take precedence in today’s struggle for a better Somalia: reforming the education system, especially with reference to women and girls; foreign direct investment, increasing foreign investment with other countries to increase prosperity and encourage economic growth to align Somalia’s FDI with other prosperous areas like Asia; and promote political transparency to increase trust and integrity with the people of Somalia. These issues are foremost on Somalia’s political agenda moving forward, to ensure a safe and enduring Somalia.

Three administrations comprise the education sector. These are: The Ministry of Higher Education in Puntland, the Ministry of Higher Education in Somaliland, and the Ministry of Education of the federal government, based in central south Somalia. Central south Somalia has shown growth in education over the years; GER (gross enrolment rate) increased from 22% in 2007 to 38% in 2012. While in central south Somalia there have been a few promising figures, the fact of the matter is that 90% of public schools were destroyed after or during the initial fighting taken place in the Somali Civil War since the early 1980’s. Adult literacy rates in Somalia are some of the worst in the world at 37.8%, and overall 80% of children are not going to school on any level. In today’s world, education is power. Education is what pushes the world forward; this is why Somalia will not let their reputation from the past define the future. The Education Sector Strategic Plan outlines the stance Somalia takes on education, and the steps Somalia will take to get literacy rates up, increase funds to improve and construct proper infrastructure, and improve communication between all levels of the education system. Part of this massive multi-layered effort involves reducing or abolishing school fees; schools all across Somalia demand fees, most of which an average family cannot pay for. The mean price for a child to go to school is just over $300; a sum to us, who take education for granted, is puny, but to a Somalian family could represent well over a whole year’s annual income (the GNI, or average annual income is $187). More teachers were and will be hired, with a projected 9.4 million being allocated to hiring and paying new teachers. The Plan also highlights the need for sex equality; cultural and social barriers have reduced the percentage of girls enrolled in schools to a mere 36%. The Plan sets out regulations for enhancing opportunities for women and girls throughout primary, secondary, tertiary and higher education, by establishing and enforcing safe education environments for women and girls, and by removing the cultural stereotypes attributed to Somalian girls. Part of creating a new generation of open-minded and equal Somali children is teaching them from the start that girls and women deserve to have equal opportunities to gain success compared to men. By implementing reformed education systems that raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and other STI’s, establish girl-only boarding schools to promote diverse female relationships, and establish girl clubs at schools that advocate female participation in school activities, Somalia’s girls will become the strong women of the future that they deserve to be. Using the outlined Plan, Somalia will provide a better, more diverse education system for boys and girls.

In reference to the second pressing issue crippling Somalia, foreign direct investment will be increased. FDI is an investment made by one business or country in another business or country, usually to expand economic growth abroad. Somalia, in order to increase foreign investment and economic demand, has a plan in development to increase foreign interest, and Somalia’s capability to invest in other countries. The third and final most important issue to form a more solid Somalia is to increase transparency and integrity in the government system. Somalia has one of the worlds highest corruption rates in the world, and it has focused in recent years on cracking down on corruption. In 2014 the Office of the Auditor General was opened, whose job is to mandate and control all government institutions and officials, ensuring no backhand or opaque deals. The Ministry of Finance has several plans and ideas to introduce intended to deal with corruption, especially in the livestock and telecommunications dominated private sector. Tackling these three issues crippling Somalia, educating girls and women, increasing and introducing efficient direct foreign investment, and cracking down on corruption and increasing integrity in government, is essential for the country to move forward.