



## Somalia Presidential Debates

### Concept Note

### Somalia's Elections 2022

As Somalia's parliamentary and presidential elections is happening at the moment we aim to develop and constitute the first ever Somalia Presidential Debates. The organisers are **Somalia Debates**, a charity entity that is non-political which aims to enhance and promote democratic choice through the art of persuasion and debate on many key challenges facing Somalia. This initiative is designed to enhance democracy and give Somali leaders present and in the future the opportunity to showcase their ideas and political mission to a wider audience. ***What future do they have for Somalia? What is their economic, security/political stability, social, international trade, Climate Change, and foreign policy? Is another future possible beyond personalistic politics?*** The **SD** hopes such discourse of this nature will forensically give the Somali audience and beyond the policy ideas and leaders on offer from Somalia.

### Rational and Why this initiative Matters?

For some time, we have been frustrated by our Somali politics. The most critical factor that has influenced our plans is the personalistic nature of our politics. The current political set up lack substance and ownership from the society at large. It is too closed a process for political elites and entities.

This is an opportunity to test the water and move the goal post towards substance led politics where political actors must explain their policies and manifestos to a wider Somali audience rather wait for political coronation that is closed from society without any accountability for their visions and aspirations for Somalia. From optics points of view, credible elections matter for all. This a new initiative but is one that must happen.

### Political Engagement and Choice

This initiate will help enhance political engagement from the Somali public by discussing substantial bread and butter issues facing their lives and country. This initiative is beyond personalistic politics and aims to promote a healthy political discourse that is interactive, engaging, and progressive for all.

## Road to Democracy for Somalia

At the heart of our mission is about democratic choice in the long run, political impartiality, and Somalia's future. The road to democratic change is never easy but it must start somewhere, and all societies and political stakeholders must pull together towards a democratic transitional future. It is within this context, we believe **SD** will help that future by promoting democratic spirit, bringing healthy politics to everyone's sofa, home and abroad.

## Role of Somalia Federal Government

While we underscore our initiative is independent of all political entities in Somalia and beyond. It is critical there is a positive buy in from all political stakeholders across the country. We owe it to our political journey and our people.

## Role for Somali Civil Society, Home and Abroad

Our politics is fractious and often unpredictable. However, we believe our civil society need to find that **middle ground** in our politics without belonging to any political camp – This where collective progressive lies ahead. Our people home and abroad have a role in enhancing the road to democracy and this initiative is intended/attempt to prepare the political climate, expectations and institutions as well as society for **One Person One vote** in the coming future Somali elections beyond 2022.

## Role of Global Civil Society

Somalia Debates has met United States based **International Democratic Institute** the co-founding member of the **Commission on US Presidential Debates** where they are providing on hand guidance/advice on our selection criteria to help advance the pursuit democracy in fragile recovering nations/societies. Advice and guidance are on hand on issues political impartiality which are integral/critical part of our plans for a fair and open process during the debates.

## Role for international community partners

**Somalia Debates** would like to take the opportunity to commend the international partner's unwavering support and the wider international commitment to Somalia's recovery and prospects. As a civil society we underscore and appreciate the sacrifices made in blood and treasure.

Our plans are unique in Somalia and these plans will enhance international partner's commitment for political stability, democratic future and the development of strong civil society that is engaged in the political process while also improving political accountability, predictability. It is our view this is in our mutual interest to help this initiative with the necessary political capital, expertise and guidance from all international partners to help rekindle a democratic culture and future in Somalia's politics.