Dear Friends of Conflict Dynamics,

As 2020 retreats behind us, we want to thank our readers, friends, partners, and supporters for standing with us throughout this challenging year and continuing to help us realize our mission. The past 12 months have taught us to be patient, resilient, flexible, cooperative, and humble. Just like all of you, we have grappled with concerns about how to continue to serve people, health worries, isolation, travel restrictions, and have learned to do our job in new and innovative ways. We came together to support each other through it all, and we could not have done it without you.

These challenges compounded each other and seemed overwhelming at times. We drew on the strength of our partners who build peace and alleviate human suffering around the world, often dealing with competing conflicts, needs, and disasters all at once. We know that violent conflict evades simple one-size-fits-all solutions and true and sustainable peace is only possible by addressing all of the root causes. This past year has again reinforced the need to address exclusion, and the inequalities that follow, as an important cause of conflict. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has
exacerbated exclusion in many countries and is contributing to greater inequality.

We approach 2021 with hope that together we can start to defeat the coronavirus pandemic and that it will become less dangerous. We witness the damage it has caused, and know that will require long-term recovery. Many approaches, methods, and practices within the humanitarian and peacebuilding fields have changed and we remain committed to fulfilling our mission in a safe and effective way.

Thank you for supporting us in the countries in crisis where we work, all while combatting your own challenges. In all of this, I and colleagues remain committed and determined to strive for peace and to alleviate human suffering throughout 2021 and beyond. Even now, during what have been dark days, we see opportunity, hope and courage, and it is that which makes our choice clear: to strain forward towards our goals.

Gerard Mc Hugh
Founder and President

Where In The World Is Conflict Dynamics?

BOSTON - CDI's Karen Lambert (Senior Advisor) and Subeida Mukhtar (Program Lead) were joined by Michele Brandt (Executive Director, Ratify) and Rania Dagash-Kamara (Chief of Policy and Best Practices, UNDPO) at the New England International Donors’ virtual panel 20 Years of Women, Peace, and Security, celebrating the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

JIJIGA - Abdinasir Hussein (Senior Program Officer, Somali Team) participated in the inaugural Somali Regional Studies Conference co-hosted by the Hankaal Institute and Jigjiga University in Ethiopia this December. Participants' discussions focused on the theme "Thinking through Ethiopia's transition and beyond in the context of Somali Region".
MOGADISHU - Our Somali Team, along with our partner Forum of Federations, travelled throughout Somalia to Baidoa, Mogadishu, and Garowe to conduct the first phase of research on attitudes towards federal arrangements in Somalia. This first phase of research included interviews and focus group discussions with over 150 people from a variety of different constituencies including elders, civil society, and regional authorities. Even with the challenges of working in a COVID-safe manner, the team was able to gather insightful and timely information.

GENEVA - In November, CDI and Life & Peace Institute held a joint session at Geneva Peace Week on "Horizontal Trust: Supporting people-to-people peacebuilding amid disruption". The session focused on new trends of mass mobilization and civil disobedience and the opportunities they present for peacebuilding. Lessons from Sudan on supporting actions for peace and inclusion guided an open discussion on supporting local and national efforts of people-to-people peacebuilding. A copy of our presentation is available here for download.

What is Happening on the Ground?

Supporting Sudanese Actors in Developing and Implementing Peace Processes

Conflict Dynamics has been working with Sudan's Ministry of Federal Governance, various non-State armed movements, and other political parties to develop a program of technical support for implementing the next steps of the peace process following the Juba Peace Agreement signed in August 2020. Preparations are underway on two conferences that were agreed to in Juba: the Eastern Sudan Conference, which will
convene the relevant parties to address the causes of conflict in Eastern Sudan; and the Governance Conference, which will directly relate to the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Juba Agreement and define the powers and vertical and horizontal relationships of the regional system of governance. In each instance, CDI will support conference organizers and participants through technical and design inputs, analysis, convening and shuttle mediation, event preparation, and consensus building.

The Sudan Team has also been busy continuing consultations with lawyers associations on the constitution process, with the goal of supporting actors to explore and design plans that are fair and inclusive. Further consultations will also focus on critical governance questions to be discussed during the process and will include political and armed groups, women's organizations, youth groups, and other civil society organizations.

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**Ensuring All Voices are Heard in Somalia**

As Somalia prepares for the upcoming Parliamentary and Presidential elections, there is a great deal of preparation needed to ensure that there will be an inclusive transition for those elected. Conflict Dynamics, and partner Forum of Federations, have made the most of the travel restrictions and other coronavirus precautions by developing a rigorous research plan for the foundation of discussion papers which will be provided to the incoming government in 2021. These papers will cover themes such as the logic of Federalism in Somalia and the approach to Distribution of Powers and Intergovernmental Relations. With the return of travel in December 2020, the Somali Team was able to begin data collection through the safe convening of regional focus groups in Baidoa, Mogadishu, and Garowe with plans for three more areas in later 2021. The team will gather opinions on attitudes to federal arrangements through different methods including surveys, focus groups, and discussions with key informants.

Back at our East Africa office, the team is developing a training manual and syllabus for women in local peacebuilding for use in training sessions in early 2021. Our ADMEL Team is busy planning our 2021 activities, adjusting to the rapidly changing circumstances and obstacles of the coronavirus situation. 2020 was not quite what we expected but we are planning with optimism for an engaging 2021.
Honoring the World Food Programme for their Work on Humanitarian Access

Conflict Dynamics Humanitarian Engagement and Access Team is thrilled that the World Food Programme has received the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize for "its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict". The work of the World Food Programme is needed now more than ever as conflicts become more violent, mass displacement reaches record levels, and climate change and natural disasters become more frequent and further destabilize regions and contribute to devastating famines. As Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the WFP, said "We believe food is the pathway to peace" and we at Conflict Dynamics applaud the WFP for their unwavering work at the intersection of humanitarian aid and peacebuilding.

Since 2014, Conflict Dynamics and the World Food Programme have worked together to overcome the obstacles of delivering food and nutrition assistance to populations in need in the environment of violent and complex crises. From Bamako, to Kabul, to Dakar, we have provided support to humanitarian practitioners to facilitate effective humanitarian access to and by populations in need and to successfully negotiate with those in power to overcome obstacles and challenges. In a field that is too often divided into different sectors, Conflict Dynamics and the World Food Programme recognize the important connection between alleviating human suffering through fulfilling humanitarian needs and the inextricable link to enabling peaceful conflict resolution. Congratulations WFP!

Colleague Spotlight
H.E. Mr. Mohamed Abdirazak  
Former Director of the Somali Dialogue Platform

Conflict Dynamics extends a well-deserved congratulations to our friend and colleague H.E. Mr. Mohamed Abdirazak Mohamud Abubakar who was recently appointed Somalia’s 24th Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

During his time at Conflict Dynamics, Mohamed was the Managing Director of the Platform for Political Dialogue and Accommodation in Somalia. This program worked to provide a neutral space to support the Somali people and their representatives to resolve persistent disagreements and build consensus on key national issues. Working in conjunction with the larger CDI Somali Program, as well as other consortium members, Mohamed and his team held meetings and conferences around Somalia, provided technical support and training, and conducted and published policy-oriented research and analysis.

Mohamed has spent most of his life serving the Somali people, dedicated to promoting unity and stability in the country. Prior to his time at Conflict Dynamics, he served as a Senior Adviser to the President on Democratization and Elections, he was a former candidate for President, and served as Country Director for the National Democratic Institute. Mohamed is highly regarded among his Somali colleagues as well as the diplomatic community for his leadership and ability to forge ties between various actors and we are excited to see his expertise and dedication recognized in this new role.

What are We Reading at Conflict Dynamics?  
Our greatest hits from 2020
Open Doors but Unable to Enter: Working on a role for everyone within the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

December 2020

A bright moment in 2020 was the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, recognizing two decades of progress for women in peace and security. Despite research showing the significant and positive impact of the inclusion of women in peace processes, they are still too often left out in the periphery of formal processes. Our latest blog piece highlights select experiences of women peacebuilders from Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan as well as recommendations for the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda going forward.

For Organizational Resilience and Impact, Focus on Business Model Not Overhead

October 2020

The coronavirus pandemic ushered in a great deal of reflection on philanthropy, humanitarian funding, and support to nonprofits around the world. At Conflict Dynamics, we joined the ongoing conversations to share our thoughts on what mission-driven nonprofit organizations could do themselves to ensure their ability to sustain and scale their impact through diversifying their business models. Read our blog post from CDI Founder and President Gerard Mc Hugh outlining a constellation of five business models for greater impact.

Consultations on Options for the Sequencing and Linkages of Political Processes during the Transitional Period in Sudan

Report on Outcomes of Consultations (April – July 2020)

AUGUST 2020

Consultations on Options for the Sequencing and Linkages of Political Processes during the Transitional Period in Sudan

August 2020

Following the revolution of 2019, 2020 has been another year of monumental change for the people of Sudan. Peace talks, which began in September 2019, culminated in October 2020 with the signing of a peace agreement between

Don’t Ignore the Need for Peacebuilding in the Midst of COVID-19 in Somalia

July 2020

During 2020, the global coronavirus pandemic was extremely disruptive to international peacebuilding missions. From mass evacuations, to travel restrictions, to lock downs, these pandemic regulations left many local and national peacebuilding organizations to continue projects by themselves, at a
the Sudan Revolutionary Front and the Transitional Government of Sudan. The Sudan Team has been active throughout the year, offering support during the transitional process. From April to July, the team conducted virtual consultations with 94 Sudanese peace process and political actors, youth, women, and other members of civil society on options for peace and other political dialogue processes as part of Sudan's Transitional Period. This report contains the results of the consultations and other analysis.

heightened risk. Conflict Dynamics' Rukiya Abdulrahman, Senior Program Officer on our Somali Team, published a blog post which dove into the unique repercussions of COVID-19 on local peacebuilding. The article not only outlines the damage COVID-19 could do to the progress Somalia has made in building peace but also highlights the steps we can take to support those who continue to work on the ground throughout the pandemic and its aftermath.

DONATE and join us in our work

Conflict Dynamics is an innovative, independent, high impact not-for-profit organization seeking to prevent and resolve violent conflict and alleviate human suffering through dialogue, convening, mediation, technical support,