

## STATEMENT

### **RE: Billboards on Community Social Cohesion**

January 21, 2020

On July 7<sup>th</sup> and July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Benadir Regional Administration hosted a football tournament for 40 young people belonging to displacement affected and host communities of Kaxda and Daynille. Along with the sporting event, the late Mayor of Mogadishu, H.E. Abdirahman Omar Osman, led a roundtable discussion with participants of the tournament and members of the greater community. Displaced affected communities and urban poor alike shared their priorities and the late Mayor instructed young people to take lead in advocating for themselves, their families and their needs.

The football tournament was documented, both in writing and through photos and videos. Any of the photos and videos we made public was used with consent from the team and coach. Consequently, we have decided to utilize some of these images for our social media, reports, and billboards across the city to drive home our belief that IDPs are a part of this city, that Mogadishu as the capital of Somalia is home to all, and that social cohesion with and integration of IDPs is critical to our development.

It has been brought to our attention that one of the participants, Mohamed Ismail whose image we used for these billboards is unhappy with the use of his image – citing that he is being ridiculed by friends and family and called an 'IDP' and clarifying that he is in fact part of the host community.

The ridicule that Mohamed is going through being associated with IDPs is the exact reason why issues like social cohesion and integration of displacement-affected communities are important and need to be addressed and further explored. Marginalization of IDPs is real, and though we are all Somali and Muslim – even these critical junctures of our identities have yet to safeguard us from the realities of stigma.

*Social cohesion and integration ought not to be viewed as a process that only occurs between people. Integration needs to be viewed from political and economical standpoints, as it has important public policy implications.*

We regret the discomfort that these billboards have caused Mohamed and will make the necessary arrangements to remove the images. The Durable Solutions Unit and our subcontractor ARTCH (media and communications consultants) would like to clarify again that these images were obtained with the consent of the team and their coach, there is further video imagery that captures the events of the day and the participation of the football team and illustrate the willing participation of Mohamed.

Since the twitter statements made by Mohamed, ARTCH management has been able to initiate contact whereby Mohamed stated that he was uncomfortable with the wording of the billboard and his association with being linked to IDPs.

ARTCH and DSU teams have been unable to reach Mohamed since the initial conversation. With Mohamed's video online today, requesting to have his image removed, we will do so within 48hrs.

**Once again we regret any undue pain Mohamed has experienced and we wish him well. He's a talented soccer player and compassionate young man.**

We implore you, to think, reflect and talk with your families, friends, and colleagues about the biases, prejudices that we may harbour, what you think the everyday life of an IDP is like, and how you can support families in need.

Yours Sincerely,

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Abdisalam Aato



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