

Turning El Niño Warnings into Community Action: The Role of Women, Media, and Civil Society

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Maadeys
Hodan, Mogadishu

Organizers



Sponsor



The Somali Women in Environment and Climate Change (SWECC), in collaboration with the Federation of Somali Journalists (FESJO), Bilan Media, and Action for Environment, convened a stakeholder event at Maadeys in Hodan, Mogadishu, under the theme “Turning El Niño Warnings into Community Action: The Role of Women, Media, and Civil Society.” The event brought together voices from government, media, and civil society to discuss the importance of early warning systems, community awareness, and coordinated action in preparing for climate-related disasters.

The discussions highlighted a critical message: early warnings work best when they reach communities in time and translate into practical action. As Somalia faces climate-related risks, strengthening collaboration among government institutions, the media, civil society organizations, and local communities remains essential to protecting vulnerable populations and building resilience.

The Director of Environment at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), Hafsa Omar Abdullahi, officially opened the event and highlighted the importance of collaboration,

timely climate information, and inclusive community engagement in building resilience. Together we can turn climate information into meaningful action



Opening remarks by Ms. Hafsa Omar Abdullahi, Director of Environment at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC)

Keynote Address: Strengthening Preparedness Through Early Action

The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Abdirisak Abdullahi Mohamed, Director of Meteorology (Weather Forecasting) at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC). His address focused on the importance of forecasting and preparedness in anticipating climate-related risks and putting appropriate measures in place before disasters strike.

A central theme of the event was the need to shift from responding to disasters after they occur towards proactive preparedness and mitigation. Participants emphasized that meteorological forecasts and official reports must reach communities in a timely, accessible, and understandable manner. Early warnings should be accompanied by practical preparedness measures, including the timely provision of assistance before conditions deteriorate and affected populations experience severe hardship.

The discussions reinforced the importance of connecting reliable forecasts with effective communication and early intervention to reduce the potential impacts of El Niño.



Keynote speech delivered by Mr. Abdirisak Abdullahi Mohamed, Director of Meteorology weather forecasting Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. (MOECC)

Panel Discussion: The Role of Women, Media, and Civil Society

The panel discussion brought together representatives from media, civil society, and environmental advocacy to explore how different stakeholders can contribute to effective early warning communication and community preparedness.

The panelists were:

- Mr. Farah Omar Nur — Secretary General, Federation of Somali Journalists (FESOU).
- Ms. Hani Asad Yasin — Director, Somali Women in Environment and Climate Change (SWECC).
- Mr. Aidid Hassan Ubeid — Program Manager, SOGPA.

The discussion underscored the importance of coordinated action to ensure that climate information reaches communities and supports timely decision-making.



Panellists at the event “Turning El Niño Warnings into Community Action: The Role of Women, Media, and Civil Society,” held in Mogadishu, Somalia, on 1 October 2026. The discussion highlighted the importance of collaboration among media, civil society, and women in strengthening climate awareness and community preparedness.

Prioritizing Women and Vulnerable Communities

Participants stressed that women and children should be prioritized in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, alongside other vulnerable groups. Assistance should reach those who need it before a crisis escalates, helping reduce the burden of climate-related disasters on households and communities with limited resources.

The discussion also explored practical ways to strengthen women's participation in climate awareness and preparedness. Women were encouraged to engage directly with communities through local markets, neighborhood networks, and other familiar community spaces to share important information and promote preparedness.

Community members were also encouraged to use their mobile phones to circulate verified warnings and preparedness messages among family members, neighbors, and wider social networks. These everyday connections can help extend the reach of important information and encourage collective responsibility.

The Media's Role in Climate Awareness

The role of the media emerged as a key part of the discussion, with participants recognizing its ability to raise awareness, communicate early warnings, and help communities understand potential climate-related risks.

However, challenges remain, including limited technical capacity, difficulties accessing remote areas affected by disasters, and competing media priorities that can result in insufficient attention to climate and environmental issues.

Participants emphasized the need for stronger collaboration between media organizations, meteorological authorities, relevant government ministries, and civil society. Official forecasts and ministry reports should be communicated to the public in clear, timely, and accessible formats that help people understand potential risks and take appropriate precautions.

Social media was also highlighted as an important tool for disseminating annual forecasts, El Niño warnings, and preparedness information. By sharing verified information through their platforms, individuals and organizations can contribute to wider public awareness and help ensure that important messages reach more people.

Reaching Communities Beyond Social Media

During the question-and-answer session, participants raised an important question: How can early warnings reach people who do not use social media or have limited access to digital communication?

The discussion highlighted the importance of combining digital communication with traditional, community-based approaches. One suggestion was to engage religious leaders, particularly imams, in sharing relevant climate warnings and preparedness messages with congregations during Friday prayers.

Community networks and direct communication can also help reach people who might otherwise miss critical information. These approaches are particularly important in areas where internet access, smartphone ownership, or access to formal information channels may be limited.

The discussion reinforced the need for inclusive communication strategies that use multiple channels to ensure that early warnings reach diverse communities, including those who are often hardest to reach.

A Shared Responsibility for Climate Action

The event concluded with a reminder that preparing for El Niño is a shared responsibility. Government institutions, the media, civil society organizations, women, and individual community members all have a role to play in ensuring that early warnings lead to meaningful action.

Participants were encouraged to share verified El Niño warnings and preparedness information through their social media platforms, helping extend the reach of official messages and raise awareness within their networks.

The discussions highlighted that effective early warning systems require more than accurate forecasts. They depend on timely communication, public understanding, inclusive outreach, and preparedness measures that enable communities to respond before hazards become disasters.

Through stronger partnerships, women's participation, responsible media engagement, and community-led awareness, stakeholders can contribute to a more prepared and resilient Somalia.

SWECC remains committed to advancing women's participation in environmental protection and climate action, while promoting community awareness and collaboration towards a safer and more climate-resilient future.



Group photo of participants, panelists, organizers, and partner organizations at the event on El Niño early warnings and disaster preparedness.