

**REPUBLIC OF SOMALILAND**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

**SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION (SNE)**

**POLICY GUIDELINES**

**(1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT)**

**Supported by:**



**Somaliland Programme**

**February 2012**

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CBO	-Community Based Organization
CBR	- Community Based Rehabilitation
DAN	-Disability Action Network
ECE	- Early Childhood Education
EFA	-Education for All
FBO	- Faith Based Organization
FPE	-Free Primary Education
HAN	-Somaliland Women and Children with Disabilities
HSSN	-Hargeisa School for Special Needs
HIV	-Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIV & AIDS	-Human Immunodeficiency Virus & Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IAS	-International Aid Services
MDG	-Millennium Development Goal
M & E	-Monitoring and Evaluation
MOE	-Ministry of Education
MOE & HE	-Ministry of Education & Higher Education
NGO	-Non-Governmental Organisation
PWD	-People with Disability
SASE	-Somaliland Association for Special Education
SEN	-Special Educational Need
SNE	-Special Needs Education
SNDF	-Somaliland National Disability Forum
SNTAC	-Special Needs Training and Assessment Centre
UNESCO	-United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	-United Nations Children's Education Fund
UN	-United Nations
WHO	-World Health Organisation

## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Education is a basic human right for all and a major agent of change towards sustainable development in any country. It lays the foundations for diverse positive initiatives and helps create civilised and orderly citizens. Education also empowers individuals by opening up avenues that would expand personal choices, providing the basis for acquiring many other skills, grants control over ones environment and becoming resourceful to ones community. Seen in this light, education is an indispensable means of unlocking and protecting human rights by providing the environment that is required to secure good health, liberty, security, economic well-being, and participation in social and political activities.

The right to be educated and not to be discriminated against is highlighted more detailed in instruments such as the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989), UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993), Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994), World Education Forum Framework for Action, Dakar (2000), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and most importantly, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) amongst others. Education for all (EFA) by 2015 is one of the global goals sited in the MDGs.

However, despite the various international conventions, one of the greatest problems facing the world today is the growing number of persons who are excluded from meaningful participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of their communities. The Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (1990) set the EFA goal while UNESCO along with other UN agencies and a number of international and national non-governmental organisations have therefore been working towards achieving these goals. However, despite encouraging developments, there are still millions of primary school age children not attending school's majority of these have special educational needs. According to WHO (2011), about 15.3% of the world's population consists of persons with moderate or severe disabilities. UNESCO (2009) says that approximately 80% of these persons live in the developing countries, including Somaliland. Among these children with special educational needs and other who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion, only a minority (about 2%) have access to education.

The Government of Somaliland is dedicated and committed to provide equal access to quality and relevant education and training opportunities to all citizens including those with special educational needs. Towards this goal, government declared free primary education (FPE) for ALL in 2011. Implementation of FPE is critical to the attainment of Universal Primary Education which is a key milestone towards achievement of the EFA goals and national development.

## **1.2 POLICY STATEMENT**

The policy statement of these SNE Policy guidelines is:

“Every citizen of Somaliland should have access to quality and relevant learning and achievement in all aspects of their education programmes irrespective of race, economic status, social class, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, disability, culture, or HIV status”

## **1.3 GOALS OF EDUCATION**

The educational goals of Somaliland which are derived from the broad national goals of the country will be:

1. To produce an inclusive society made of individuals with enriched moral, social and intellectual skills and attitudes necessary for the growth and survival of the individual of Somaliland
2. To promote within the inclusive society, the acquisition and application of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to fulfil its potential for development in a continuous changing world.
3. To promote within the inclusive society:
  - Equitable access and achievements of quality education
  - Produce individuals with proper skills in the management and utilization of physical environment
  - A sense of responsibility for peace and improved relations at the individual, family, community, national and international levels
  - The growth of civic consciousness in an informed and socialized citizenry committed to mutual understanding, a culture of peace, an acceptance of diversity and toward resolving differences without violence
  - Values of loyalty, self-reliance, tolerance, co-operation, diligence, openness, inquiry, critical thought, honesty, justice, fairness and peace.
  - Awareness of the need for and the active promotion of social justice in the context of Islam and mutual consultation (Shuura)

## **1.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The SNE policy guidelines will be guided by the following key principles:

- i) Equal access to all educational institutions, available resources and other professional services by learners with SEN
- ii) Meeting the individual learning and development needs of learners with SEN
- iii) Giving same rights, freedom and responsibilities to learners with SEN like those of the same age without SEN
- iv) Equitable access to services that meet the individual learning and development needs of learners with SEN within diverse learning environments.
- v) Non-discrimination enrolment and retention of learners with SEN in any institution of learning.
- vi) Professional delivery of services to learners with SEN for the best of their interests
- vii) Learners with SEN language and culture is vital for learning and development and must be considered when planning education programmes
- viii) Barrier-free transition of learners with SEN through the various educational levels in accordance with their abilities through to post school levels.
- ix) Learner – centred curriculum and responsive learning systems and materials.
- x) Protection of human dignity and rights of learners with SEN.
- xi) Gender parity applying equally to men, women, boys and girls with SEN to ensure equity and equality.
- xii) Active partnerships between parents and families of learners with SEN and other education providers are essential in overcoming barriers to learning.

## **1.5 OBJECTIVES OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

The SNE policy guidelines shall aim to achieve the following objectives:

- i) To enhance early identification, assessment, early intervention, proper placement and construction/rehabilitation of learners with SEN.
- ii) To promote quality and relevant education opportunities in all learning institutions for learners with SEN
- iii) To provide learners with SEN with appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes, self-concept and values for individual development so as to realise their potential to be useful and valuable members of the society
- iv) To provide learners with SEN with appropriate insights, spiritual, moral and Islamic values to enable them to relate well with others and take responsibility for good social relations in the community
- v) To put in place measures to promote access, participation and barrier free environment for learners with SEN at all levels.
- vi) To develop capacity of SNE professionals, specialists and essential service providers to deliver quality services to learners with SEN

- vii) To develop and provide the necessary resources in Special Needs Education including specialised facilities and equipment, educational materials and professionals to support learners with SEN.
- viii) To create and promote public awareness on the needs, rights, independence, freedom and capabilities of learners with SEN
- ix) To assist the learners with SEN to acquire suitable basic foundation for the world of work in the context of economic and manpower needs so as to be self-reliant.
- x) To promote effective Management and Coordination of SNE and other related service
- xi) To promote integration and inclusion of learners with SEN into the society

## **1.6 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

### ***What is Special Needs Education (SNE)?***

Special Needs Education is an educational provision geared towards meeting the diverse learning needs of learners with special educational needs through appropriate modification of the curricula, teaching methods, education resources, medium of communication and the learning environment in inclusive settings.

#### **1.6.1 TARGET GROUP**

Persons with special educational needs remain some of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in the society. They are discriminated from birth and therefore educationally disadvantaged due to cultural factors, ignorance and superstitions, socio-economic factors, political and economic environments in which they live.

### ***What are special educational needs (SEN)?***

Special educational needs are conditions or factors that may hinder an individual's normal learning, participation and development. They may be temporary or life-long. The conditions that may hinder progress of an individual may include disability, social, emotional, health or political difficulties. These factors can be within the learner (*intrinsic*) or in the environment and society (*extrinsic*) or combination of both.

### ***Who are learners with special educational needs?***

Learners with special educational needs are those with barriers to learning and hence vulnerable to discrimination, marginalisation, isolation and exclusion to education. They can be defined as:

*“Learners who are experiencing barriers to learning and are directly or indirectly excluded from or denied the chance to optimally participate in the learning activities which take place in formal, non-formal or informal settings”*

A learner may thus have special educational needs (barriers to learning), if he/she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age group in similar environment,
- is significantly ahead of other children of a similar age group, experience or environment in education achievements which may require a different education approach to meet his/her needs,
- has a disability which either prevents or hinders him/her from making use of education facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in similar environment.

**NB:** A child must not be regarded as having special educational needs solely because the language or medium of communication of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught.

### **1.6.2 Groups of Learners with Special Education Needs**

The groups of learners with SEN include:

- Learners with hearing impairments
- Learners with visual impairments
- Learners with physical disabilities
- Learners with cerebral palsy
- Learners with epilepsy
- Learners with mental disabilities
- Learners with Down's syndrome
- Learners with autism
- Learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Learners with specific learning difficulties/learning difficulties
- Learners who are gifted and talented
- Learners with speech and language difficulties
- Learners with multiple disabilities
- Learners who are deaf blind
- Learners with albinism
- Learners with chronic health problems

**NB:** These learners can vary very much in degree. The needs and extent of every individual person is unique. Individuals can have some of the above conditions in a smaller degree that may not be considered as a barrier to learning or functioning in general. Some therefore require substantial and regular support while others need occasional support to overcome slight learning barriers.

Other groups are those living under especially difficult circumstances and hence in need of care and protection. These include:

- Children from nomadic/pastoral communities
- Children living in the streets
- Children who are orphaned
- Children heading families
- Children who are abused and neglected
- Children who are refugees/displaced
- Child labourers
- Child soldiers
- Children from poverty stricken families
- Children in conflict with the law (e.g. juvenile prisoners and drug abusers)
- Children affected or infected by HIV & AIDS
- Children from ethnic minorities
- Children from linguistic minorities
- Children from geographically disadvantaged areas

## **1.7 RATIONALE FOR THE SNE POLICY GUIDELINES**

The Government of Somaliland declared free primary education (FPE) for all in 2011. Implementation of FPE is critical to the attainment of Universal Primary Education which is a key milestone towards achievement of the EFA goals and national development. However, this goal will only be achieved when the current education provision is extended to reach out individuals with SEN and others who are vulnerable and excluded from receiving quality education through coordinated SNE programmes.

Special Needs Education and related services enable learners with SEN to have equitable access to learning and opportunities to pursue and fulfil their full potential. However, lack of clear policy guidelines for the provision of SNE has resulted in poor coordination of activities of SNE service providers. This may lead to duplication, substandard and unregulated provision of services to learners with SEN. This hinders the realization of the government's commitment of providing quality services to learners with SEN. The major challenges are in the areas of capacity building of personnel, quality assurance, examinations, curriculum development and learning/teaching materials.

Special Needs Education has been provided on the basis of general education policy and statements, which have not been translated into clear SNE policy guidelines. It is against this background that these SNE Policy Guidelines are being developed to guide the work of all actors involved in provision of Special Needs Education to ensure consistency and a coordinated implementation.



Towards the accomplishment of the government's goal on education and training, these policy guidelines are important in the elimination of disparities and enhancement of equity and equality for all learners and inclusion of learners with special educational needs in the education system at all levels. The guidelines will also serve to harmonize and coordinate education service provision for learners with SEN by the government and other service providers.

The policy guidelines shall provide a framework of the principles and strategies to be followed in order to create and enhance equal access to quality and relevant education and training for learners with SEN. The policy also acknowledges other initiatives that are ongoing to bridge any gaps arising out of provision of SNE. It identifies extra measures that will be taken by the government and other stakeholders to redress inequities and inequalities and extend the current education provision to reach out those with SEN and other vulnerable groups.

## **1.8 POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

The core of Special Needs Education is the human right to education, pronounced in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), recognising diversity as the main characteristic of humanity. In education this diversity should be used as a constructive force in building societies. Therefore, education policies must be sufficiently diversified and so designed as not to become another cause of social exclusion.

The right to be educated and not to be discriminated against is also highlighted more detailed in various local policy documents and international conventions and agreements. These documents recognise the need to accommodate and provide quality and relevant education to all learners including those with SEN at all levels.

In Somaliland the following policies, legislation and guidelines specifically refer to the rights and interests of providing quality education to all learners:

- Somaliland National Constitution (2001)
- Somaliland National Education Policy (2005)
- Somaliland National Education Act (2007)
- Somaliland Education Sector Strategic Plan (2007-2011)
- Strategic Plan for Primary Education for Disadvantaged Groups (2008-2011)
- Handbook for Inspection of Special Needs Education Manual (2008)
- Special Needs Education Handbook for Quality Assurance and Standards (2009)
- Teachers Code of Education (2010)
- Somaliland National Disability Policy (2011)
- Somaliland National Development Plan (2012-2016)
- Inclusive Education Guidelines

On the International scene the following documents amongst others highlights issues related to Special Needs Education:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- The World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien (1990)
- The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994)
- World Education Forum Framework for Action, Dakar (2000)
- UN Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

It is important that to be conversant with these policies and legal frameworks relating to SNE both at the national and international levels.

## **1.9. CURRENT STATUS OF SNE IN SOMALILAND**

Educational opportunities for learners with SEN are a major challenge to the education sector. The national education system has been characterized by lack of systems and facilities that respond to the challenges faced by learners with SEN. Enrolment of learners with SEN is the lowest in all education sub-sectors. Institutions are very limited in number; specially teachers are inadequate in number and quality, professionally qualified staff at the MOE&HE to properly coordinate SNE service providers, low quality education in terms of relevant teaching/learning materials and equipment. Other challenges include lack of monitoring/supervision by MOE&HE and lack of reliable data on children with SEN who are in and out of school.

However, despite the challenges there is commitment from the government and other service providers to expand education opportunities for persons with SEN and other marginalised groups, in order to achieve the global initiative of achieving EFA goals. The attainment of aspiration requires an overall mobilization of resources as well as seeking support, partnerships and collaboration with the general public, communities and development partners. This will enhance increase in enrolment rate of learners with SEN at all levels of education and ensure retention and successful completion rates of these marginalised groups.

On the historical overview, Special Needs Education in Somaliland started in 1954 when Save the Children, UK, established a centre at Hargeisa for rehabilitating people who were injured during the Second World. Majority of them had lost their limbs during the war and hence had physical disabilities. In addition to rehabilitation, the centre then called Somaliland Social Welfare Centre (later turned to a school) taught the war veterans various courses such as, shoe making, tailoring, poultry and carpentry so that they could be self-reliant later in life. Literacy and basic academic work was also taught to those war veterans. From this time, it was not until 1992 when another rehabilitation centre was

established at Hargeisa known as Hargeisa Rehabilitation Centre (then known as Hargeisa Physiotherapy Centre) which gives various services to persons with physical disabilities.

At the moment there are ten schools and centres catering for persons with special educational needs in Somaliland from pre-school through primary to pre vocational levels. These are special schools, integration schools, special units and rehabilitation centres. They are:

- i) Hargeisa Handicapped Centre (started in 1954)
- ii) Hargeisa Rehabilitation Centre (started in 1992)
- iii) Boramo School for the Deaf and Blind (started in 1997)
- iv) Hargeisa School for the Deaf (started in 2001)
- v) Hargeisa School for Special Needs (started in 2002)
- vi) Somaliland Braille Centre (started in 2006)
- vii) HAN School for Physically Handicapped (started in 2006)
- viii) ANDP Centre for the Disabled (started in 2007)
- ix) Bade Deaf School (started in 2008)
- x) Burao School for the Deaf (started in 2010)

In addition to the above institutions, International Aid Services (IAS) has established five Special Needs Training and Assessment Centres (SNTACs) in the five regional headquarters in the country. These are Hargeisa in Maroode Jeex, Burao in Togdheer, Eregavo in Sanaaq, Boramo in Awdal and Berbera in Saaxil. There are also two Special Units in Elgavo and Togdheer regions.

IAS is also undertaking in-service training of teachers on SNE from all over the country to give them knowledge, skills and attitudes so as to effectively support learners with SEN in regular schools.

## **1.10 SCOPE OF THE SNE POLICY GUIDELINES**

The scope of the SNE policy guidelines will apply to all education, training and research activities, interventions and programmes. The guidelines will include (but not be limited to) the following key stakeholders:

- i) Public and private service providers to learners with special educational needs
- ii) Development partners, CBOs, NGOs, FBOs
- iii) Learners (both with and without SE
- iv) Heads and managers of educational institutions
- v) Ministry of education and other government ministries and departments
- vi) Other SNE service providers

The policy guidelines will cover the following sub-sectors:

- i) Early Childhood Education
- ii) Basic Education (Primary, Formal, Non-formal, Informal)
- iii) Secondary Education
- iv) Higher and Tertiary Education
- v) Technical and Vocational Training
- vi) Teacher Education

In line with the global and national trends, the policy will address issues *of access, equity, retention, transition, relevance and quality of education* in Special Needs Education.

### **1.11 SWOT ANALYSIS**

#### **Strengths**

- 1. Recognition and adaption of need of having the policy guidelines
- 2. Existence of SNE Focal Point in the MOE
- 3. Increased establishment of SNE schools
- 4. Existence of special schools for various groups of learners with SNE, SNTACs (Assessment centres) and special units

#### **Weaknesses**

- 1. Lack of clear policy guidelines on SNE
- 2. Inadequate expertise on SNE
- 3. Negative cultural and societal attitudes
- 4. Unequal distribution of services of SNE
- 5. Lack of adequate SNTAC services
- 6. Inadequate government funding of SNE programmes
- 7. Limited teaching/learning materials for the various groups of learners with SEN
- 8. Lack of proper coordination between MOE, line ministries and other service providers of SNE
- 9. Restructuring of SNE in the MOE & HE
- 10. Lack of data on children with SEN who are in and out of school
- 11. Lack of awareness on SNE

## **Opportunities**

1. Support from local and International communities
2. Existence of data on SNE from international research institutions
3. Support from the private sector and Somali landers in the Diaspora
4. Political stability and peace

## **Threats**

1. Sustainability of SNE programmes
2. Poor school environment, infrastructure and social instability
3. Poverty
4. Stigmatisation of people with SEN

### **1.12 CHALLENGES IN THE PROVISION OF SNE**

Weaknesses and threats in the SWOT are accounted for as challenges. Additional challenges are:

1. Lack of adequate specially trained teachers on SNE
2. Lack of adapted curriculum for learners for SEN
3. Lack standardised assessment and evaluation criteria for various groups of learners with SEN
4. Lack of proper monitoring and evaluation on SNE programmes
5. Lack of proper coordination between MOE and service providers
6. Lack of motivation for teachers supporting learners with SEN in the mainstream schools.
7. Negative attitudes towards learners with SEN
8. Lack of adequate teaching/learning materials and assistive devices
9. High cost of specialised materials and equipment for learners with SEN
10. Lack of SNE language development for learners with hearing and visual impairment (deaf and blind)
11. Difficulties to reach out PWDs who live in geographically difficult areas

## **SECTION 2: THE SNE POLICY GUIDELINES PROVISIONS**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The SNE policy guidelines shall address the following 13 key target areas which have been incorporated as policy guidelines' provisions. These areas of interventions are:

1. Assessment and early intervention
2. Access to quality and relevant education
3. Conducive, accessible and safe environment
4. Inclusive education
5. Specialized facilities and equipment
6. Curriculum development and adaptation
7. Capacity building and human resource development
8. Participation and involvement
9. Advocacy and awareness creation
10. Partnerships and collaboration
11. Gender mainstreaming
12. Research and documentation
13. Resource Mobilization

### **2.2 Assessment and Early Intervention**

#### **Background**

The success of SNE depends considerably on early identification, assessment and stimulation of the very young child with special educational needs. Effective early identification and intervention strategies are based on multidisciplinary teams of professionals, accurate assessment of the special needs and clear referral systems. In order to carry out these functions adequately, there should be established Special Needs Assessment and Training Centres (SNTACs) fully equipped with the necessary tools as well as qualified personnel. Parents and the community are primary in the process of identification.

Development partners and other actors in the education sector play a major role in facilitating early identification, assessment and placement of learners with special educational needs. They provide resources and services for ECE. ECE processes are integral to the early identification, assessment and intervention of children with special educational needs. Development organizations carry out intensive advocacy programmes aimed at ensuring effective policy and legal frameworks within which issues of children with special educational needs can be addressed holistically. They also enhance the capacity of ECE programmes and ECE teachers in Special Needs Education.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Teachers working in Assessment Centres should be specially trained. Assessment should follow multi-disciplinary approach where the assessment team should be made up of the teachers and other professionals for example medical personnel and social workers from other ministries like Health & Social Services.

### **Objective**

To establish and strengthen structures for early identification, assessment and intervention of learners with special educational needs.

### **Policy Statements**

The MOE in collaboration with other ministries and government bodies and partners will:

1. Develop and continuously review a curriculum in assessment in line with the requirements of children with special educational needs
2. Conduct in-service and professional development courses for assessment teachers
3. Establish formal linkages with relevant ministries, partners and professionals in assessment, referral and intervention of learners with special needs
4. Develop new and continuously review existing assessment and referral tools.

### **Strategies**

1. Develop training manuals and guidelines in assessment of learners with special educational needs.
2. MOE will put in place mechanism for engaging partners, professionals and other ministries in the assessment and rehabilitation procedures; such as Joint committees, joint planning meetings at all levels, joint implementation and pooling of resources.
3. Develop assessment and referral tools/mechanisms
4. MOE shall establish and enhance linkages with the Ministry of Health for appropriate assessment, referral and follow up of learners with special educational needs.

## **2.3 Access to Quality and Relevant Education**

### **Background**

Enrolment of learners with special educational needs in educational institutions is still very low. However the various learning institutions in the country are ill equipped and most school environments not accessible and hence not conducive to learners with special educational needs.

### **Issues and Constraints**

The main challenges relating to access and equity in the provision of education and training to children with special educational needs include:

- Lack of guidelines to support inclusive education implementation

- Lack of data on children with special educational needs in and out of school
- Inappropriate infrastructure and inadequate facilities and lack of equipment for the children included in regular institutions.
- The current examination system is also limiting and rigid and denies the majority of learners with special educational needs opportunities for higher education.
- Lack of coordination among service providers
- Inadequate supervision and monitoring of Special Needs Education programmes.

### **Objective**

To increase access to quality and relevant education for learners with special educational needs at all levels of ECE, Basic, Secondary, Higher, TVET and Teacher Education.

### **Policy Statements**

The MOE shall:

1. Enforce equal access and inclusion of persons with special educational needs and training programmes at all levels.
2. Intensify monitoring, supervision and quality control in all schools to ensure that children with special educational needs are provided for without discrimination.
3. Ensure provision of learning and teaching materials in accessible formats

### **Strategies**

MOE (in collaboration with partners) will:

1. Sensitize administrative and other personnel working with learners with special educational needs on their needs in education
2. Educate the parents, other learners and the communities on special educational needs.
3. Intensify monitoring, supervision and quality standards in all schools to ensure quality education
4. Expand educational services to cater for other categories of children and youth with special educational needs not currently catered for in learning institutions.

## **2.4 Conducive, accessible and Safe Environment**

### **Background**

The physical environment where learners with SEN operate should be accessible and or be disability friendly. It is important that learners with special educational needs operate in educational environments with minimum support. Learners with special educational needs require more conducive material resources for their education than their non-disabled peers. Support to minimise existing barriers that make the school environment unfriendly to learners with special educational needs should be a priority.



## **Issues and Constraints**

Currently, the learning environment including the location of institutions, buildings, amenities, equipment and furniture pose accessibility challenges to learners with disabilities. This implies that the physical environment where children with special educational needs operate should allow them to access education with minimal hindrance. School (and other related) environments that are disadvantageous children with special educational needs include:

- School physical environment and infrastructure
- Social amenities like churches and mosques
- Public transport such as buses
- Public utilities like libraries, toilets, telephones, etc

## **Objective**

To enhance provision of accessible, safe and friendly learning environment and facilities for learners with special educational needs.

## **Policy Statements**

The MOE shall:

1. Facilitate establishment of barrier free environment in all learning institutions in liaison with development partners
2. Ensure that learners with SEN are provided with regular treatment and medicine to preserve or improve their level of functioning.
3. Institute measures to ensure appropriate modification of learning institutions to respond to the needs of learners with special educational needs.

## **Strategies**

The MOE will:

1. Provide resources/solicit resources to make all learning institutions accessible to children with special educational needs.
2. Ensure provision of adequate and accessible and friendly buildings, furniture and equipment and environment among others in learning institutions
3. Constantly collaborate with Ministry of Health in provision of medical services to the learners with SEN.
4. MOE shall collaborate with Ministry of Health to expand immunization against preventable diseases that lead to special educational needs.
5. Ensure that all learning institutions have safe environment that are user friendly to learners with special educational needs.

## **2.5 Inclusive Education**

### **Background**

The government of Somaliland is placing emphasis on inclusive education through regular schools for learners with special educational needs. However, special schools and units are essential for learners with severe physical or multiple disabilities. With the increase in demand for Special Needs Education and in line with the international development, the government should adopt Inclusive Education. This approach will increase access to education for children with special education needs. Inclusive education calls for restructuring of the education system in terms of physical facilities, environment, curriculum, methods of teaching, communication and other aspects to children joining schools of their choice and convenience within the community.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Lack of prior preparation and clear conceptualization of the philosophy of inclusive education can lead to emotional and social problems to the learners. There are areas to be addressed before the approach is fully realized. These include:

- Modification of teaching and learning aids
- Capacity building of teachers and other personnel
- Review of examination formats
- Adaptation of Curriculum
- Adaptation of the physical environment to be accessible
- Public awareness and advocacy to change the negative attitudes

Mainstreaming of Special Needs Education in all education sub-sectors and programmes has been faced with a number of challenges. These challenges include inappropriate infrastructure, inadequate facilities, and lack of equipment which makes it difficult to integrate Special Needs Education in regular programmes, inadequate capacity among teachers to support learners with SEN, inadequate and expensive teaching and learning materials

### **Objective**

To increase enrolment and promote values which enhance access to education and retention of learners with special educational needs in all learning institutions.

### **Policy Statement**

MOE shall recognize and reinforce inclusive education as one of the means for learners with special educational needs to access education.

## **Strategies**

1. MOE in collaboration with partners will promote the development and use of Somaliland Sign Language
2. MOE and partners will provide funds for adaptation of infrastructure and facilities in learning institutions.
3. MOE and partners will provide and fund forums for learners with special educational needs to participate in co-curricular activities so as to enhance social integration.
4. Teacher education curriculum will be reviewed in order to impart skills and competencies in teaching learners with special educational needs.
5. MOE will enforce affirmative action in admission for learners with special educational needs at all levels.

## **2.6 Specialized Facilities and Equipment**

### **Background**

Some learners with specific disabilities and special educational needs require specialized educational resources at individual and at school levels depending on the nature and extent of disability. The high cost of this special equipment for learners with special educational needs remains a hindrance to the government's goal to provide education for all in line with the global goal of Universal Primary Education. There is insufficiency and inadequacy of assistive devices for learners with special educational needs. This hinders the learners' ability to cope with demands of daily life in school and work. Mobility and reading aids are expensive and require maintenance by skilled technicians.

There is also inadequate provision of appropriate teaching and learning materials for SNE because most of the materials available in the market are mainly developed for the regular curricula and regular students. The limited availability of curriculum support materials also limits the ability of the teachers in SNE to employ a variety of content, teaching and learning activities for effective curriculum delivery. Apart from the funds allocated to every learner in primary schools, those with special education needs get a top up capitation to cater for specialized teaching/learning material and other assistive devices. This capitation has not been formalized as it is usually done in ad hoc basis.

Teachers and support staff in schools and units which have learners with SEN should be in-serviced on needs assessment and maintenance of specialized equipment and technological devices.

### **Issues and Constraints**

There is inadequate provision of appropriate teaching and learning materials for SNE because most of the materials available in the market are mainly developed for the regular curricula and regular students. The limited availability of curriculum support materials

also limits the ability of the teachers in SNE to employ a variety of content, teaching and learning activities for effective curriculum delivery.

**Objective**

To support learners with special educational needs to access affordable assistive devices.

**Policy Statement**

The MOE will in collaboration with partners ensure that learners with special educational needs have access to specialized facilities at subsidized cost.

**Strategies**

1. MOE will provide information on available technical/assistive devices.
2. Teachers will train learners with special educational needs on the use of assistive devices.

**2.7 Curriculum Development and Adaptation****Background**

MOE through support from IAS has made an effort to adapt Primary Social Studies syllabus for learners with visual impairments. Despite this effort, it is notable that several other curricula and examination support materials for learners with special educational needs require to be developed. The government and other stakeholders have to undertake coordinated and collaborative interventions to develop suitable curricula for learners with special educational needs.

**Issues and Constraints**

Appropriate curriculum can enable persons with special educational needs acquire necessary skills and attitudes within settings that best suit them. The curriculum should be adapted to learners' needs and not vice-versa. It should be adequately responsive to the different categories of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Learners with SEN should receive additional instructional support in the context of regular curriculum and not a different or special curriculum. The curriculum should therefore be adapted to be flexible in terms of time, teaching/learning resources, methodology, mode of access, presentation and content.

**Objective**

To develop diverse and flexible curriculum that meets varied needs and learning environment of learners with special educational needs.

## **Policy Statement**

The Ministry of Education shall ensure continuous review, adaptation and development of curriculum that is tailored to the needs of learners with special educational needs.

## **Strategies**

1. MOE in collaboration with partners shall develop curriculum for all specialized areas in special educational needs education and monitor their implementation to ensure sensitivity to the needs of learners with special educational needs.
2. MOE in collaboration with partners will expand teacher training curriculum to include a component of Special Needs Education to develop their capacity to support learners with special educational needs in regular schools
3. MOE will design examinations and provide certification to learners with special educational needs who do not sit for national examinations due to their diverse learning needs.

## **2.8 Capacity Building and Human Resource Development**

### **Background**

The government is conscious of the fact that capacities and skills of staff at all levels within SNE should be commensurate with the tasks they perform. The success of SNE services and education depends on provision of specialized human and institutional capacity. There is no college for training SNE teachers in Somaliland although IAS and other partners have been in-servicing teachers in various regions.

However, the government is committed to achieving social equality especially in the provision of equal opportunity and access to education for all learners including those with special educational needs. The government is also focused on the development and implementation of effective criteria for appointment and deployment of education managers at all levels of the education system.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Many service providers of Special Needs Education are not specially trained. The government is committed to observance of international standards that promote inclusion of persons with special educational needs in national development. The issue of capacity building is of very significant concern in provision of Special Needs Education. This is because the success of SNE services requires specialized personnel in terms of teachers and other staff.

Learners with SEN also require services of other professionals and members of the community apart from teachers. Such personnel include teacher aides, house mothers/fathers, sign language interpreters, readers etc. Services of these professional are lacking in the education system due to lack of training opportunities.

**Objective**

To facilitate provision of effective and efficient professional and support services to learners with special educational needs in institutions of learning/training.

**Policy Statement**

The Ministry of Education shall undertake and collaborate with development partners to develop mechanisms to improve efficiency in human resource training and deployment in institutions offering SNE

**Strategies**

1. MOE in collaboration with development partners will Increase opportunities for continuous training of teachers and other personnel involved in Special Needs Education.
2. MOE will provide scholarships to teachers, learners with SEN and other personnel involved in SNE to undertake higher training opportunities.

**2.9 Participation and Involvement****Background**

Participation and involvement of learners with special educational needs in socio-economic issues directly or indirectly is important in the process of ensuring that these learners enjoy equal opportunity in society. Participation of the target group entrenches ownership of the development process by the group members. Involvement provides a sense of belonging in the whole system. It is therefore critical that learners with special educational needs participate in all matters within the learning environment. Participation and involvement should be at all levels

**Issues and Constraints**

Learners with special educational needs in schools are sometimes marginalized. They have not been actively involved in sporting, cultural and recreational activities. Their participation is limited due to inaccessibility and/or unsuitability of the facilities. In addition these activities have been organized separately and have not been mainstreamed. Consequently persons with disabilities hardly benefit from the solidarity and team building benefits derived from sports, culture and recreational activities. Issues related to special educational needs are often absent and therefore not adequately addressed within the education system and other forum.

**Objective**

To promote participation of learners with special educational needs and other key stakeholders in decision making on matters that affect their education.

**Policy Statement**

The MOE will involve persons with special educational needs in decision making processes at all levels in education and training.

## **Strategies**

1. MOE to develop modalities to involve persons with special educational needs in decision making on issues that concern them in their schools.
2. MOE will encourage institutions to employ persons with special educational needs in learning institutions.
3. CECs will engage and utilize learners with special educational needs in sports, culture and other recreational activities.
4. School administration will encourage formation of clubs and associations for learners with special educational needs in learning/training institutions

## **2.10 Advocacy and Awareness Creation**

### **Background**

Lack of awareness of learners with SEN, service providers, policy makers and the community at large is a common problem. There is low level of advocacy and lobbying for the rights of persons with SEN by concerned parents, communities and disability organizations. Issues relating to special educational needs are not given prominence in public meetings and the media.

Lack of accurate data on children with SEN hampers proper national planning and provision of effective services to persons with SEN and disabilities. NGOs, FBOs and other development partners have made effort to create awareness, sensitize communities, lobby and advocate for policy development and reviews, however they face challenges as their services are not well coordinated. The media has an important role in sensitizing the public on the needs and rights of persons with disabilities.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Persons with disabilities are sometimes marginalized and excluded from social economic development and political spheres. The marginalization is largely founded on misconceptions and mistaken beliefs, cultural practices and attitudes, which have led to prejudice, and discrimination. As result, the majority of learners with special educational needs have limited access to education due to lack of public awareness that would otherwise address these issues.

The following issues are to be addressed to reach more children with SEN:

- Use of print and electronic media for awareness creation
- Sensitization of policy makers
- Co-operation between government and other education providers
- Inclusion of persons with disabilities in leadership as role models.

**Objective**

To advocate and create awareness among stakeholders on the needs and issues affecting learners with special educational needs.

**Policy Statements**

The MOE will:

1. Recognize and respond to issues of advocacy on learners with special educational needs in line with other existing policies, conventions and practices.
2. Undertake continuous awareness creation and campaigns on SNE.

**Strategies**

1. MOE will sensitize public transport providers on the special transport needs of persons with special educational needs.
2. MOE will use both public and private electronic and print media in sensitizing and creating awareness among the general public.
3. Teachers shall instil in all regular learners moral values of mutual support and responsibility towards learners with special educational needs.
4. MOE in collaboration with partners will educate stakeholders on the legal and social rights of learners with special educational needs.

**2.11 Partnerships and Collaboration****Background**

The government is working in collaboration with various partners in the provision of SNE. Partners and other stakeholders need to be guided by policy guidelines to ensure effective coordination and implementation of SNE programmes. An integrated approach is necessary for various government ministries, partners and stakeholders for improved service delivery for SNE.

Parents and the community are important partners in the whole education process of SNE. They provide primary care, security and protection to children with special educational needs. They play a critical role in the socialization process of the child and inculcate life principles including spiritual and moral values for character development. Parents and the community as a whole are also responsible for the immediate survival needs of the child including proper nutrition, immunization and growth monitoring. Parents and the community are primarily responsible for early identification of disabilities, assessment and intervention. As key partners in the development process of the child, parents and the community need to work closely in collaboration with the government to ensure children with special education needs have equal access to quality and relevant education.

NGOs, private sector, CBOs, FBOs, bilateral and multi-lateral organizations form a core group of partners with whom the government collaborates in the implementation of SNE. Some of these groups of partners provide SNE services directly through sponsoring



institutions, they facilitate improvement of learning facilities and infrastructure through grants making. They carry out advocacy and provide technical support including capacity building on SNE.

The government recognizes that education requires heavy investment and hence partnerships and collaboration is key to achieving its goal in education. It is an important policy option for the government to partner and collaborate with non-public providers of education to reduce gaps in public financing especially in SNE. The government is placing emphasis on partnerships at all levels including households, local communities, private sector, FBOs and Civil society organizations, NGOs, Foundations and multi-lateral organizations to ensure the attainment of the overall goal of EFA goals in all education sectors.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Parental and family support in terms of health, nutrition and provision of learning resources for children with special educational needs is important. However, most parents, families and communities are not involved in the education of learners with special educational needs. Consequently, some of these parents and families play a minimal role in supporting their children access education.

Many development partners support Special Needs Education. This is usually done through financial assistance to institutions. Sometimes there is duplication of services due to lack of coordination among different assisting agencies. There is need to coordinate all the service providers in order to avoid wastage and duplication. Secondly, learners with SEN who complete formal education are sometimes underutilized or even denied chance to participate in nation building.

### **Objective**

To establish new and strengthen existing partnerships and collaborations in special educational needs education among all stakeholders.

### **Policy Statement**

The MOE shall Encourage and coordinate partnerships and collaboration with other stakeholders in provision of services and materials towards Special Needs Education.

### **Strategies**

MOE shall (in collaboration with partners):

1. Periodically organize stakeholders national conferences to share information on special educational needs
2. Coordinate the activities of development partners for purposes of transparency and non-duplication of activities.

## **2.12 Gender Mainstreaming**

### **Background**

Gender mainstreaming to ensure equity and equality in SNE is a challenge. Gender differences in favour of males are considerable. Girls with special educational needs and particularly those with disabilities are doubly disadvantaged. Generally, the national education system has been characterized by gender disparities at the national level and across regions. SNE has not been spared. The widest gender gaps exist at higher education levels and hence the need to address gender issues in SNE.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Special Needs Education has not been accorded adequate attention in comparison to the regular education programmes. While education has grown rapidly in Somaliland over the last decade, the SNE sub-sector has lagged behind. The community and society in general have a negative attitude towards people with special educational needs. The situation is worse for the girls and women with special educational needs. They face a bigger challenge than their male counter-parts in the use of unsuitable infrastructure, learning facilities and participation in sports and other social activities. Girls with disabilities, especially multiple disabilities are sometimes exploited and abused. This is because they have limited mental and physical capacities to protect themselves or even report.

### **Objective**

To enhance gender mainstreaming in SNE programmes at all levels and ensure increased enrolment, participation and completion rates for both girls and boys with special educational needs in education.

### **Policy Statement**

To address gender disparities in SNE, the ministry will encourage gender mainstreaming of boys and girls with special educational needs in education programmes at all levels.

### **Strategies**

MOE will employ the following strategies to implement the above policies:

1. Create awareness and sensitize communities on the importance of SNE, especially for the girl child;
2. Sensitize teachers, communities and other stakeholders on the provisions of the gender policy in education;
3. Carry out surveys and research to understand the gender and education issues for learners with special educational needs and advise the government and other stakeholders on emerging issues and how to address them;
4. Develop conducive and accessible physical environments for learners with special educational needs with specific emphasis on the girl child.

## **2.13 Research and Documentation**

### **Background**

Research plays an important role in industrial transformation and development, socio-economic growth and poverty reduction. Management of research lies within the MOE and Higher Education. Documentation of research findings, recommendations and conclusions is an important part of development of learning. The dissemination of examples of good practice could help to improve teaching and learning. Documentation provides critical means of reference for future learning and recording of lessons learnt. It is a best practice in any growing economy and industry.

Special Needs Education should be integrated into the research and development programmes of research institutions and curriculum development centres. The government is collaborating with development partners to carry out research in various sectors of education. The government needs to invest more on research and target priority development areas for more funding. The government is also committed to ensuring that research findings are widely disseminated and utilized. Despite these efforts, specific research on SNE continues to remain a challenge due to various reasons.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Research in Special Needs Education and disability is inadequate. Constraints facing research and development include lack of effective coordination between various actors; lack of harmonization on research policies and limited research funding. Others challenges are limited appreciation for the role of research and documentation, poor linkages between research and development programmes, inadequate mechanisms and systems for dissemination and utilization of research findings and absence of up-to-date research bank of inventories. Demand driven research and collaboration has not been effectively utilized. There is need to design effective programmes on disabilities, using various research methods, conducted continuously to gain new knowledge about emerging issues.

Research findings would be used for proper planning and discovery of new approaches to provision of education to learners with special educational needs, more so those with disabilities which up to now have no institutions to cater for them. There is need to provide funds and resources for research and establishment of a data bank on Special Needs Education service providers. Findings of most researches conducted are not disseminated for use due to lack of coordination and centralized research system to handle them.

### **Objective**

To promote research, documentation and information sharing in Special Needs Education.

## **Policy Statement**

The MOE shall undertake and provide an enabling environment for research development, documentation and information sharing in Special Needs Education

## **Strategies**

MOE shall in collaboration with partners:

1. Undertake research on different aspects of children with special educational needs and ensure documentation and dissemination to stakeholders.
2. Undertake baseline surveys to establish the actual numbers and requirements of learners with special educational needs.
3. Provide funds and other resources for research on Special Needs Education and development of appropriate technology for learners with special educational needs
4. Establish and strengthen databank on Special Needs Education within the planning division of the MOE and the utilization of the data in planning and resource allocation for Special Needs Education.
5. Ensure the dissemination of research findings to planners, consumers, stakeholders

## **2.14 Resource Mobilization**

### **Background**

Resource mobilization is imperative for the success of SNE services. Resources play a significant role in enabling provision of SNE services in the country. SNE services require specialized human, materials and physical resources. Human resources required include specially trained teaching staff, support staff such as teacher aides, professionals in assessment, sign language interpreters, note takers, counselling psychologists, paramedics and medical specialists, social workers, parents and the community as a whole. There is need for teachers in regular schools to be in-serviced in SNE to ensure inclusive education is mainstreamed as planned.

Learners with SNE require more and specialized material resources for their education than their non-disabled peers. Material resources are needed at both the individual level and school level. The nature and type of materials required depend on the type and degree of disability. The physical environment where SNE learners operate should be accessible to them and disability friendly. This calls for adequate allocation of material resources to learning institutions to improve physical structures and provide individual SNE learners with basic learning aids. The government provides basic facilities and learning materials, however specialized assistive and functional devices are still a challenge.

### **Issues and Constraints**

Adequate human and material resources and proper utilization of administrative structures are crucial in the implementation and the realization of the objectives of the policy. Lack

of adequate staffing in SNE and regular educational institutions is a major constraint in the provision of quality and relevant education to learners with special educational needs. Many parents cannot afford assistive and functional devices needed by learners with SEN as they are expensive and out of reach. They should be supplemented by other service providers, which include individuals, Faith Based Organizations, civil Society Organizations, the corporate sector, bilateral and multilateral agencies.

### **Objective**

To enhance resources mobilization and sustainable professional and support services to learners with special educational needs.

### **Policy Statement**

The MOE in collaboration with development partners will continuously review and increase budgetary allocation to institutions and programs that provide Special Needs Education.

### **Strategies**

MOE will (together with partners):

1. Identify programmes on Special Needs Education that require financial support.
2. Provide bursaries, loans and scholarships of learners with special educational needs for further studies.
3. Allocate adequate funds for teaching and learning materials for learners with SEN.
4. Put in place sound procurement processes to facilitate easy and timely access to the required equipment and material
5. Provide incentives for local production of relevant equipment and material

## **SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY GUIDELINES**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

A multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary strategy is imperative for successful implementation of the SNE policy guidelines. A collaborative effort between the MOE and other line ministries, private education providers, Civil Society Organizations, FBOs, NGOs, CBOs, parents, Somalilndas in the Diaspora and other development partners. However, the primary responsibility and accountability of implementing these policy guidelines remains with the Ministry of Education.

### **3.2 IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

Effective implementation and coordination of the SNE policy requires a detailed financing strategy, Management and Coordination structures, Internal Control systems and structures such as the Monitoring and Evaluation framework, interpretation of the policy and a provision for Review and Amendment of the policy to keep abreast with changing trends and emerging issues.

### **3.3 MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION OF SNE**

The Ministry of Education will establish as section of Special Needs Education. The section shall be responsible for the general management, coordinating and administration of SNE in the country. The section will be responsible for ensuring that the efforts and services of other stakeholders who provide SNE and support are coordinated and geared towards attainment of the government goal of provision of accessible quality and relevant education for all citizens including those with special educational needs. It will also ensure compliance with these SNE policy guidelines. A multi-sectoral approach will be used in the management of SNE services in Somaliland.

### **3.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

A comprehensive Monitoring and evaluation (M & E) framework will be required to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the SNE policy guidelines. The M & E framework shall address issues of monitoring processes to collect information/data, analyze, report and recommend necessary action for improvement of SNE service delivery in the country. An indicator performance monitoring tool shall be developed to track continuous implementation and consumption of SNE services by the target group and other publics. Specific activities will include identification and development of SNE responsive indicators and targets, building capacity of the inspectorate team on the indicators and the M&E framework concepts and procedures, actual field monitoring, evaluation and interpretation of findings for use in future planning and improvement.

Continuous monitoring will be undertaken by the MOE and will be used to inform the process of decision making on areas that require immediate, medium term and long term planning and improvement. Feedback from evaluations will be used for overall programme improvement.

### **3.5 IMPLEMENTATION OF SNE POLICY GUIDELINES**

Educational services for children with special educational needs call for concerted efforts between the Government and development partners. A multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary strategy is therefore important for successful implementation of the SNE policy guidelines. A collaborative effort is required between the Ministry of Education and other line ministries, private education providers, Civil Society Organizations, FBOs, NGOs, CBOs, parents, and other development partners. However, the primary responsibility and accountability of implementing these policy guidelines remains with the Ministry of Education.

### **3.6 REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF THE POLICY**

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with key stakeholders will regularly review the SNE policy guidelines to be in line with the international trends on SNE preferably every 3-4 years. Reviews shall incorporate emerging issues and trends, both local and global that impact on SNE services. Specific policy provisions may be reviewed from time to time in circumstance where there is a major legal and policy shift that requires government ratification and inclusion in the national legal framework. The review of part of or whole SNE policy shall remain the prerogative of the MOE.

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Thank you

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