UN-HABITAT

Qoloji Decongestion

Workshop #1 Package

July 22, 2025 , Addis Ababa



Background

The Consultative Workshop on the Decongestion of Qoloji IDP Site, held on July 22, 2025 in Addis Ababa, brought together key stakeholders from federal and regional government bodies, UN agencies, development partners, and community representatives. Organized by UN-Habitat in collaboration with the Somali Regional President's Bureau and the Disaster Risk Management Bureau (DRMB), the workshop aimed to advance durable solutions for one of Ethiopia's largest protracted displacement sites through inclusive, evidence-based planning and coordinated action.

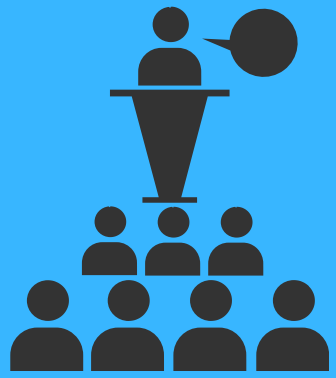
Building on years of spatial profiling and multi-sectoral assessments, the workshop served as a platform to share progress, validate findings, and collaboratively explore feasible decongestion and integration pathways. Grounded in the Somali Region's Durable Solutions Strategy (DSS), discussions focused on aligning humanitarian, development, and peace building efforts to promote sustainable local integration, climate resilience, and community-driven recovery for Qoloji and surrounding host communities.



Objective

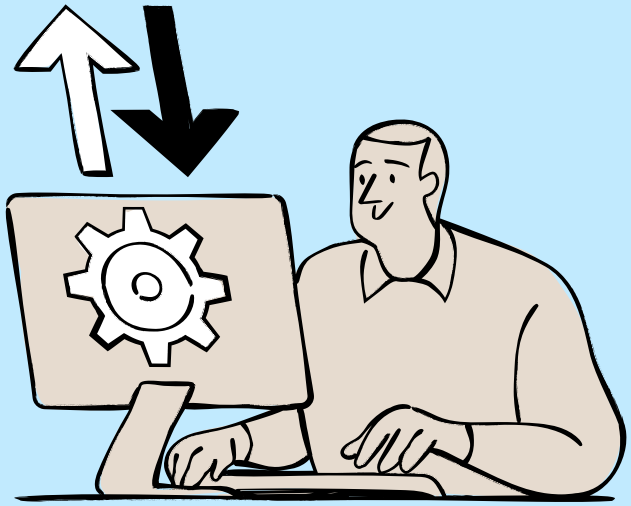
- **Share and validate:** findings from spatial assessments, settlement profiling, and planning analyses conducted to date which have been used to inform multi-sectoral development for Qoloji and its surrounding areas.
- **Create a common understanding:** of national requirements, standards, and livelihood opportunities necessary for sustainable settlement planning and effective land budgeting.
- **Facilitate dialogue:** among regional authorities and technical experts to explore feasible decongestion and integration scenarios that reflect local realities and socio-political sensitivities.
- **Lay the foundation for coordinated action:** among government bodies, UN agencies, development partners, and communities to ensure that future durable solutions are spatially feasible, socially acceptable, and economically viable.





OPENING SESSION TAKEAWAY

- **Opening Remarks:** UN-Habitat, Somali President's Office, IDSF, and DRMB emphasized collaboration, the strategic importance of Qoloji, and the need for inclusive planning.
- **IDSF Overview:** Shared progress and funding updates, positioning Qoloji as a learning model for durable solutions and inclusive development across Ethiopia and beyond.
- **UN-Habitat Presentation:** Highlighted its work since 2019, including spatial profiling and integrated planning, and stressed the importance of community ownership in future phases.
- **Somali President's Office Speech:** Reaffirmed commitment to transforming Qoloji into a sustainable community, stressing land availability and proactive planning.
- **Call for Coordination:** Emphasis was placed on aligning stakeholders and securing land through cooperation with host communities to avoid conflict.
- **Shared Vision:** All speakers underscored the need for a roadmap grounded in resilience, inclusion, and long-term development for Qoloji's residents.

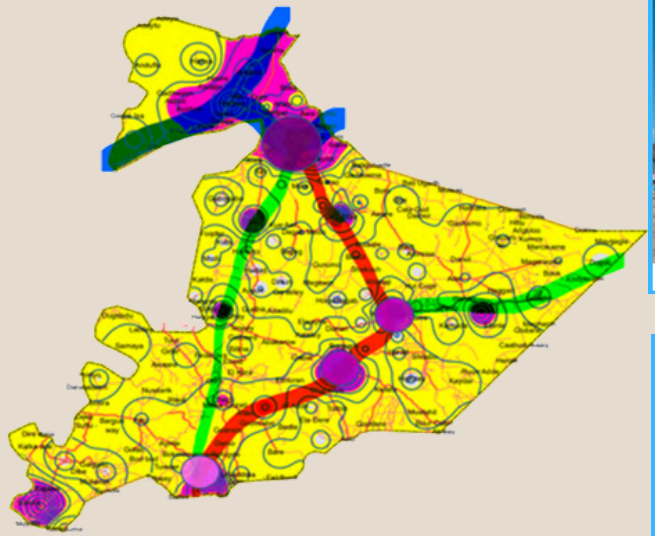


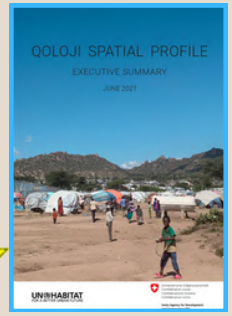
DRMB– Update on Durable Solutions

- **Current Displacement Overview:** The Somali Region hosts 662,784 IDPs across 432 sites, with Qoloji alone sheltering 96,000 individuals, highlighting the scale of protracted displacement.
- **Progress Made:** 79,249 households have returned to their places of origin, and 3,911 households have been relocated to 16 designated sites, reducing conflict-induced displacement by 40%.
- **Government Commitment:** The Somali Regional Government has invested over 601 million birr (~10 million USD) in durable solutions, supported by the Durable Solutions Working Group (DSWG).
- **Opportunities Ahead:** Strong government leadership, communal support, and donor alignment offer momentum for implementing the Somali Region Durable Solutions Strategy, with 70% of Qoloji IDPs preferring reintegration.
- **Persistent Challenges:** Recurring displacement, funding gaps, limited peacebuilding actors, and basic service shortages in rural relocation sites continue to hinder sustainable integration.

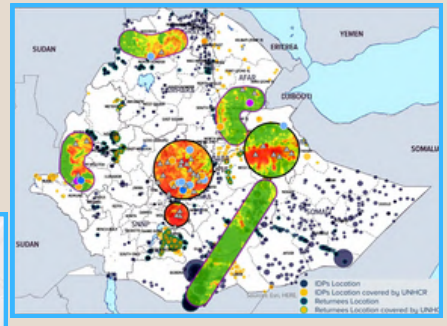
UN-Habitat Presentations Takeaways





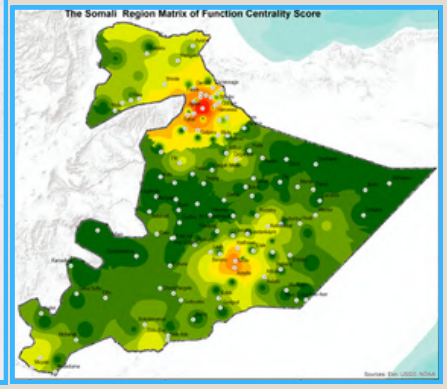










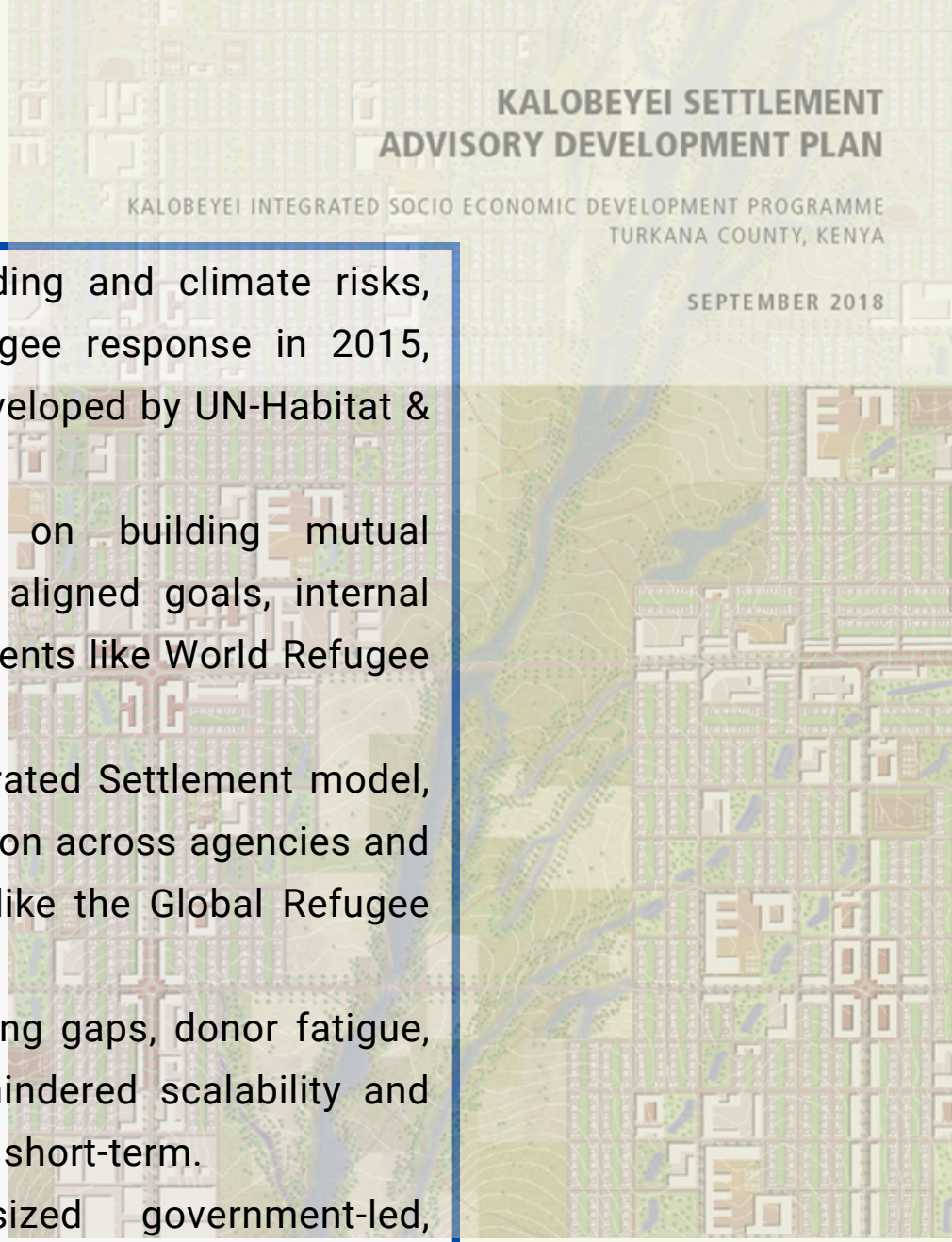


UN-Habitat's Strategic Role: UN-Habitat combines urban planning expertise with humanitarian–development linkages, giving it a strong position to support displacement settlement and urbanization challenges.

- **Integrated Planning & Capacity Building;** Through settlement planning, service delivery, & institutional strengthening, UN-Habitat ensures that both host and displaced communities benefit from sustainable, inclusive growth, creating the foundation for smoother IDP integration.
- **Spatial Tools & Evidence-Based Approaches:** Using spatial profiling & resilience frameworks like CityRAP, UN-Habitat provides practical tools to guide planning and decision-making, helping to identify needs, prioritize services, and map pathways for inclusion in Qoloji and similar settlements.
- **Regional Partnerships & RDSP Support:** In supporting nine regions, including Somali, with preparing 20-year regional governing plans, UN-Habitat has a vantage point, ensuring IDP integration is systematically embedded within regional development frameworks, local community plans, and governance structures for sustainable and inclusive outcomes.
- **Durable Solutions for Displacement:** Initiatives like the Qoloji Spatial Profile link immediate humanitarian support with long-term development, providing a coordinated approach that bridges IDP needs with community development through One-UN and multi-donor collaboration.

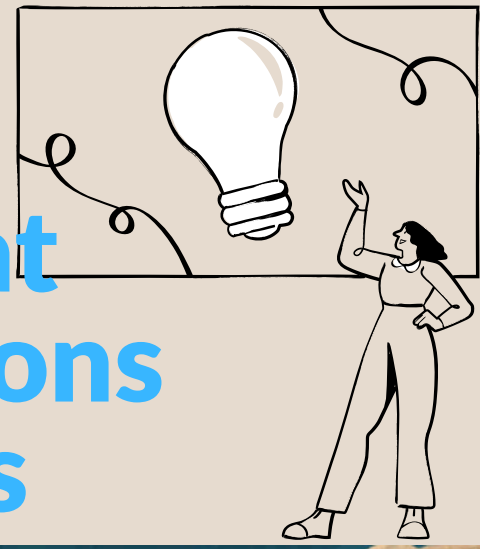
These combined strengths position UN-Habitat as a strategic actor shaping sustainable, resilient, and inclusive pathways for IDP settlement Integrations

Lessons from Kalobeyei (Kenya)

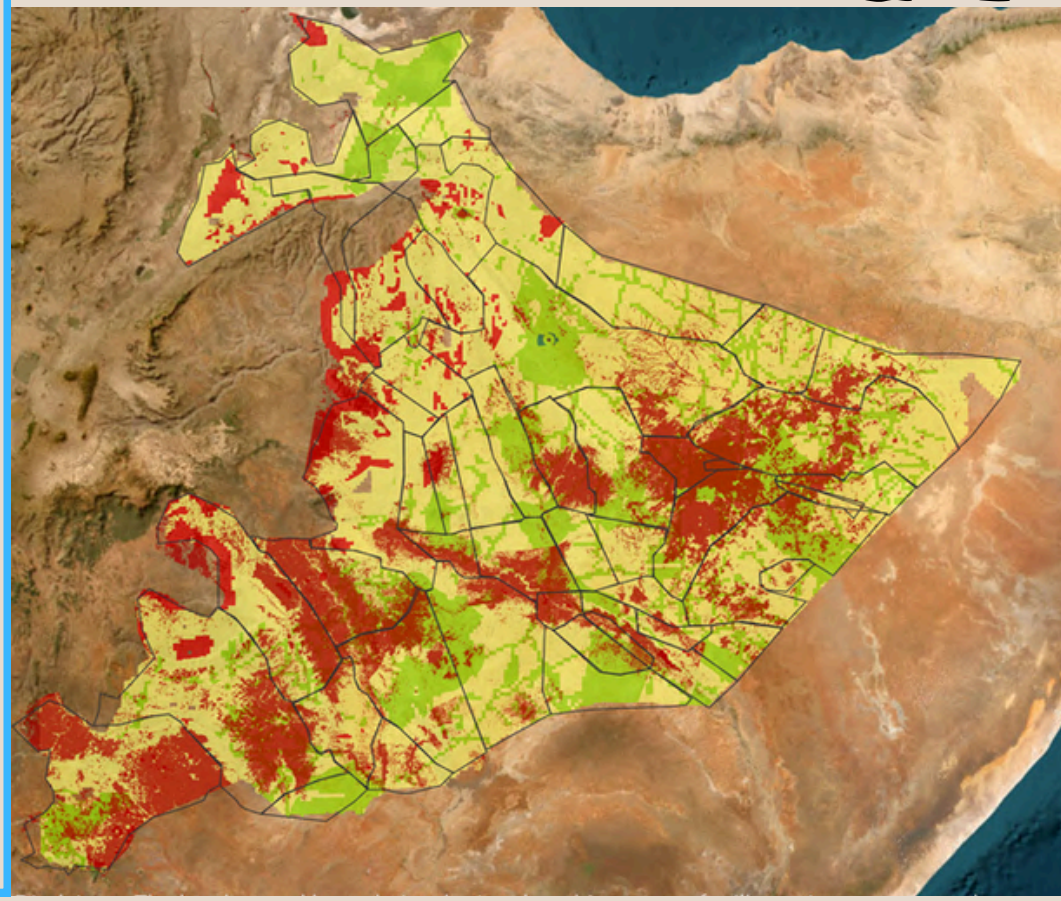


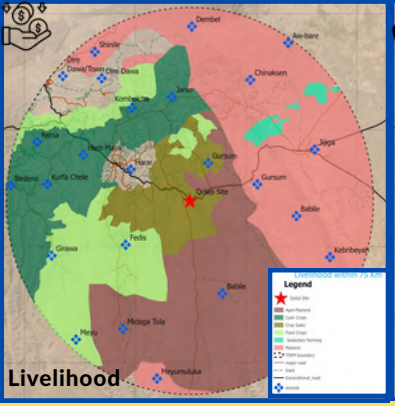
- **Context & Response:** Faced with overcrowding and climate risks, Turkana County initiated a sustainable refugee response in 2015, leading to the Kalobeyei Settlement model developed by UN-Habitat & UNHCR.
- **Trust & Collaboration:** Success hinged on building mutual understanding through regular engagement, aligned goals, internal coordination, and high-level participation in events like World Refugee Day and donor missions.
- **Achievements:** The initiative piloted an Integrated Settlement model, catalyzed investment, and fostered collaboration across agencies and donors, including the EU and global forums like the Global Refugee Forum.
- **Challenges Faced:** Coordination issues, funding gaps, donor fatigue, and resource limitations—especially water—hindered scalability and long-term impact, with many efforts remaining short-term.
- **Lessons & Recommendations:** Emphasized government-led, community-driven planning, enabling legal frameworks, inclusive coordination platforms, and the need for flexible, long-term, demand-driven approaches to livelihoods and service delivery.

UN-Habitat Presentations Takeaways

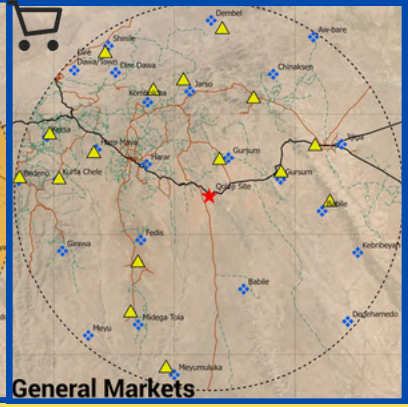


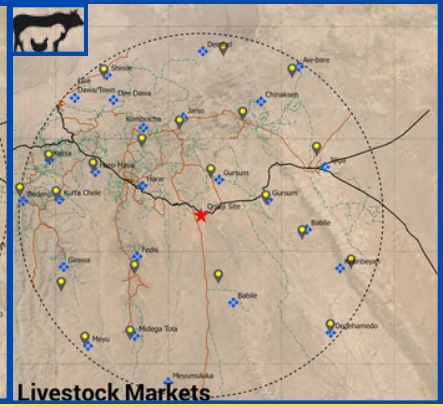
- **Tailored Assesment:** UN-Habitat conducted separate spatial analyses for Qoloji I (rural agrarian) and Qoloji II (urban traders), factoring in clan dynamics and digitized secondary data to guide relocation planning.
- **Relocation Trade-offs:** While relocation could reduce costs and improve access to services and livelihoods, it risks disrupting social networks and may face resistance due to past negative experiences.
- **Land Suitability Findings:** Out of the region, 57.5% was suitable for agro-pastoralists and 21.97% for urban IDPs, though highly suitable areas were limited, underscoring the need for careful site selection.
- **Recommended Interventions:** Success depends on detailed profiling, spatial planning, standard housing, infrastructure upgrades, early livelihood support, and inclusive consultations with all stakeholders.
- **Three Decongestion Scenarios:** Ranged from moderate to ambitious, with varying land and financial requirements ($111M to $2.27B).
- **Challenges & Opportunities Ahead:** Urged sustained investment and coordination to address climate shocks, funding gaps, and political uncertainties, while leveraging corridor-based development, infrastructure upgrades, and local institution strengthening.

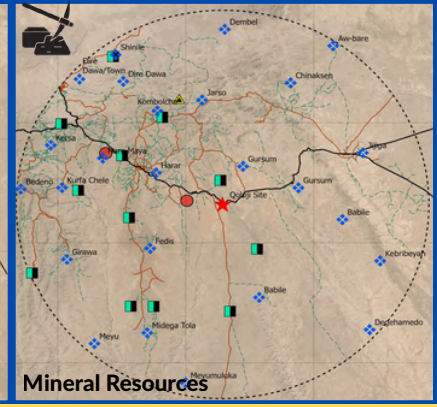












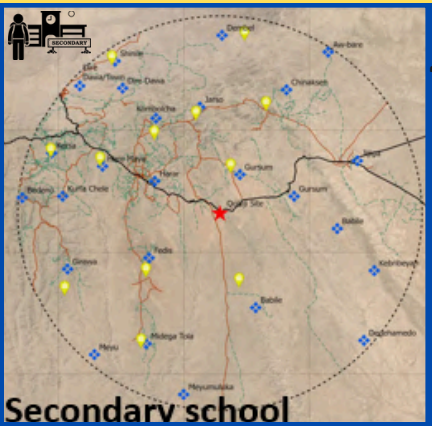
UN-Habitat has conducted a comprehensive 75-kilometer radius assessment around Qoloji, examining the availability and condition of services, infrastructure, and resources that residents may potentially utilize. The assessment maps critical facilities such as health centers, schools, water points, markets, transportation networks, and other community assets, providing a detailed understanding of the local environment.

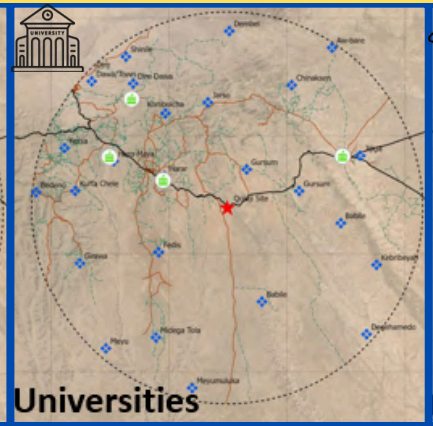
The focus of this assessment is on tertiary-level infrastructure and resources that communities could realistically access and benefit from once they are settled within the Somali regional state. By identifying gaps, capacities, and opportunities, this work supports evidence-based planning for the integration of residents, ensuring that both immediate needs and long-term development priorities are considered in alignment with regional development plans and local governance structures.

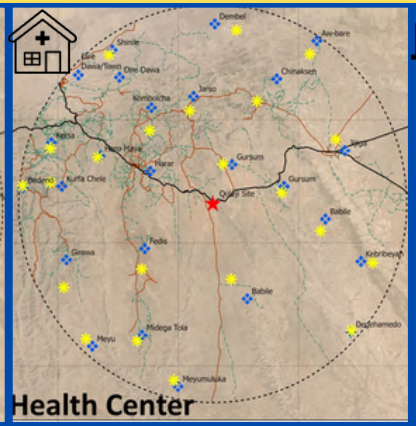
Functional Area

75-KM Radius Assesment

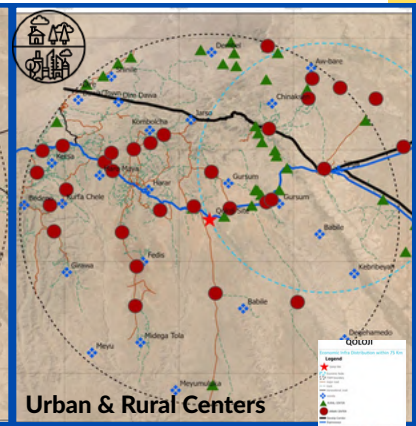
One-Hour Commuting Distance











The Three Decongestion Scenarios



UN-Habitat presented three decongestion scenarios for the Qoloji IDP site, based on three population sizes, developed using spatial profiling, population needs, infrastructure access, and regional planning priorities. These scenarios address the complex realities of Qoloji's IDPs—split between rural (Qoloji I) and urban (Qoloji II) livelihood groups—and are designed to provide flexible, realistic, and scalable pathways toward durable solutions. The scenarios cover a range of population sizes, from conservative to moderate to ambitious, drawing on both developmental data (housing capacity and household counts) and humanitarian registration figures, as well as a midpoint between the two.

SCENARIO 1

- **Land Needed: ~70 hectares**
- **Estimated Cost: USD 111 million**
- **Primary Focus: Decongesting the most overcrowded sub-zone (likely Qoloji II) or relocating only a fraction of the population.**

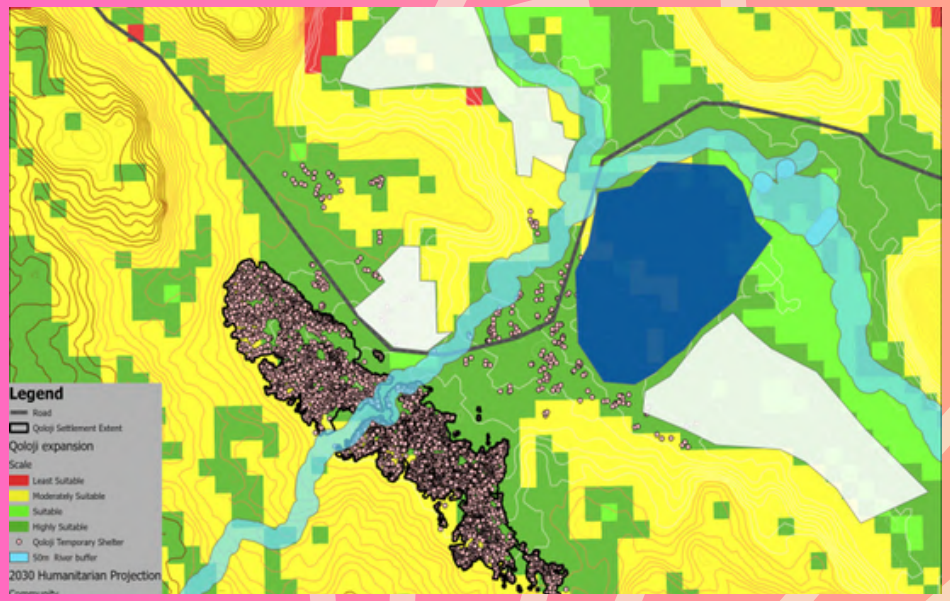
SCENARIO 2

- **Land Needed: ~171 hectares**
- **Estimated Cost: USD 169 million**
- **Primary Focus: Relocating a significant portion of both rural and urban IDPs, improving conditions for the rest.**

SCENARIO 3

- **Land Needed: ~272 hectares**
- **Estimated Cost: USD 2.271 billion**
- **Primary Focus: Transforming Qoloji into a fully planned, integrated urban settlement—or relocating the entire population to a new site.**

SCENARIO 1



CORE FEATURES:

- Selective relocation of the most vulnerable households or overcrowded areas.
- Leverages existing infrastructure nearby to reduce the need for full-scale service development.
- Aims to improve conditions in Qoloji without fully disbanding the current settlement.

PROS:

- Lower financial and land demands make it more feasible in the short term.
- Easier to implement politically and logistically.
- Allows for phased implementation and gradual buy-in from stakeholders.

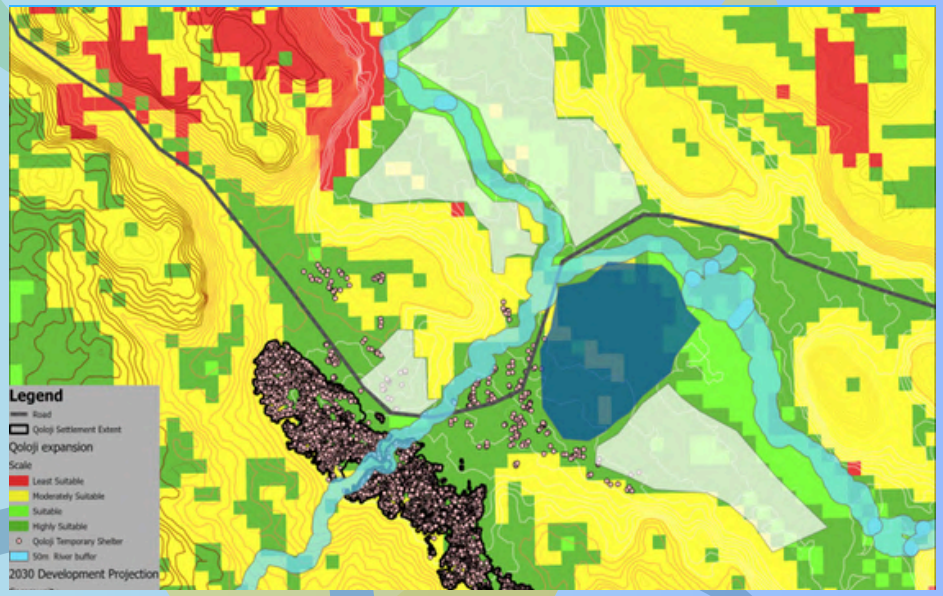
CONS:

- Minimal impact on overall congestion; the bulk of IDPs would remain in current conditions.
- Risks creating unequal conditions or perceptions of favoritism.
- May not address long-term sustainability or land scarcity in Qoloji.

SCENARIO 2

CORE FEATURES:

- Mixed solution: Partial relocation + targeted on-site improvements.
- Tailored to accommodate livelihood differences, clan structures, and social networks.
- Allows for infrastructure investment in both relocation and host sites.



PROS:

- Balances cost and coverage; reaches more people without overextending resources.
- Supports more inclusive planning for both Qoloji I and II populations.
- Reduces pressure on existing services while promoting sustainable expansion.

CONS:

- Requires more complex coordination among actors (land acquisition, service delivery, governance).
- Still may not fully resolve service gaps for the remaining population.
- Political sensitivity may arise over who is selected for relocation vs. those left behind.

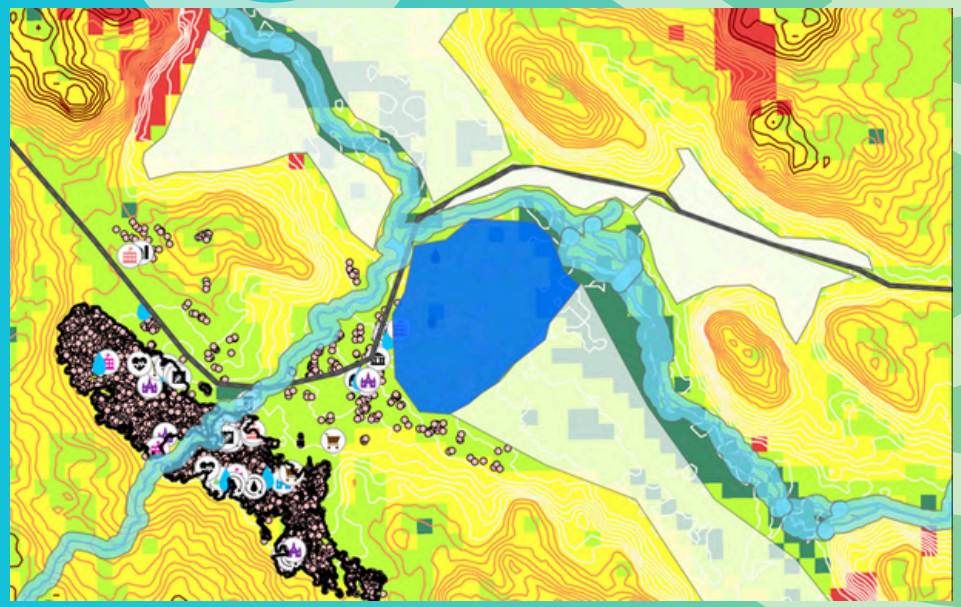
SCENARIO 3

CORE FEATURES:

- Comprehensive planning of infrastructure, services, housing, and economic hubs.
- Aims to deliver a model urban expansion—either by upgrading Qoloji in situ or creating a new town.
- Seeks to fully address root causes of displacement and ensure dignified integration.

PROS:

- Offers a durable, long-term solution rooted in sustainable development.
- Could serve as a national and regional model for future integration initiatives.
- Addresses environmental concerns, economic self-reliance, and spatial justice holistically.



CONS:

- Extremely high cost may be unrealistic without multi-donor investment and political commitment.
- Land acquisition at this scale could provoke strong resistance if not carefully negotiated.
- Operational complexity: needs deep intergovernmental coordination, long timelines, and safeguards to prevent secondary displacement.

Open Discussion Points

- **Land & Integration Challenges:** DRMB emphasized that while many Qoloji IDPs prefer local integration, land availability for upgrading the site remains a major obstacle, especially given clan dynamics and the lack of formal ties to surrounding communities.
- **Data & Environmental Concerns:** Regional authorities inquired whether data collection efforts had taken existing local datasets into account. They also raised concerns about environmental degradation, particularly deforestation resulting from the proposed settlement expansion plan.
- **Political & Institutional Factors:** Speakers stressed the need for stronger collaboration among stakeholders, political commitment, and capacity-building for local authorities to address sensitive land and clan issues effectively.
- **Feasibility & Funding Questions:** Participants highlighted concerns of proposed land and cost estimates, and encouraged an aggressive assessment of funding prospects to ensure the viability of the initiative."
- **Legal & Community Engagement Gaps:** UNHCR and LWF highlighted the importance of learning from local contexts, and addressing the lack of legal frameworks that could hinder implementation.



Open Discussion



UN-Habitat's Response

- **Flexibility & Inclusivity:** UN-Habitat emphasized the need to act quickly as IDP preferences evolve, presenting multiple scenarios to encourage open political dialogue and inclusive planning.
- **Data & Methodology:** Acknowledged issue of humanitarian and developmental numbers in data due to differing methodologies, but stressed the exploration of various sources and the value of having diverse information sources to guide site assessments and decision-making.
- **Environmental & Land Sensitivity:** Recognized environmental degradation and land scarcity as critical issues, noting that natural resources were mapped and factored into scenario planning.
- **Commitment to Capacity Building:** Reaffirmed dedication to strengthening local institutions and continuing consultations with other regions and stakeholders to ensure sustainable, coordinated solutions.
- **Regional Integration, Mobility and Service Access**: UN-Habitat emphasized that IDPs are mobile and already rely on nearby cities for essential services such as healthcare, education, and employment. This highlights the need for planning that extends beyond Qoloji and includes coordination with surrounding regions and municipalities. Reinforcing the need for inter-regional collaboration.
- **Scenario Flexibility and Political Dialogue**: The multiple decongestion scenarios were intentionally designed to be flexible, serving as a foundation for political dialogue rather than fixed solutions. UN-Habitat stressed the importance of continued consultations and political consensus to guide next steps.

Group Work Takeaways

GROUP 1 – SERVICE/ INFRASTRUCTURE & POPULATION DATA VALIDATION:

- Use existing data from WFP (SCOPE), DTM, and physical verification.
- Coordination among DRMB, local authorities, and service bureaus is key.

GROUP 2 – MISSING CONSIDERATIONS

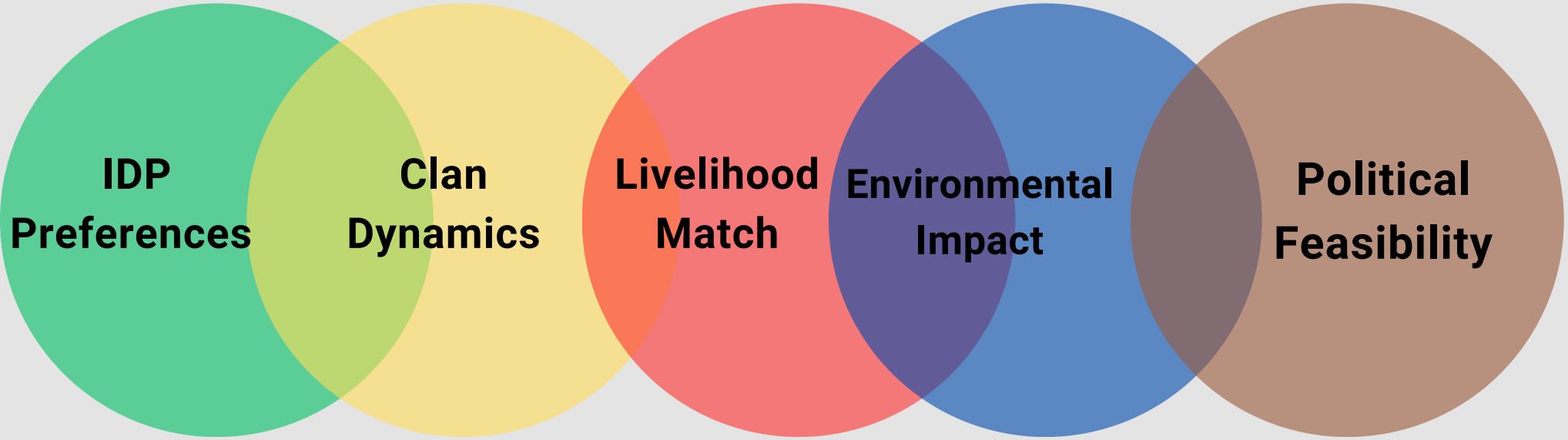
- Consider legal rights, sustainability, land fertility, and private sector engagement.
- Emphasized conflict sensitivity and social cohesion.

GROUP 3 – LIVELIHOOD AND LAND ALLOCATION:

- Urged assessments of skills, market linkages, and value chains.
- Stressed need for community consultation and fair compensation in land allocation.



Cross-Cutting Considerations Across All Scenarios



IDP Preferences

Over 70% now prefer local integration, emphasizing the need for options that prioritize voluntary, informed, and consultative relocation.

Clan Dynamics

Social cohesion and historical land ties must be factored into any resettlement or integration plan.

Livelihood Match

Rural vs. urban profiles require differentiated land use, job creation strategies, and service models.

Environmental Impact

Land use decisions must consider sustainability, forest degradation, and resource limits.

Political Feasibility

Scenarios are tools to stimulate political dialogue, not fixed blueprints. Final outcomes depend on government leadership, donor commitment, and regional consensus.



CLOSING REMARKS TAKEAWAYS

UN-Habitat:

- Valued stakeholder input and committed to a sustainability assessment informed by today's dialogue.
- Qoloji initiative should & must be aligned with the wider Somali Region's Development plan, —ensuring it is not just a humanitarian response, but a strategic part of the region's future.
- Emphasized the need for continued consultations and stakeholder support moving forward.

DRMB:

- Highlighted the importance & the constructive nature of the workshop discussions.
- is committed to translate dialogue into action & calls on all partners to ensure Qoloji's successful integration
- Commended UN-Habitat's technical leadership, recognizing its role as a key enabler in shaping sustainable, data-driven solutions.

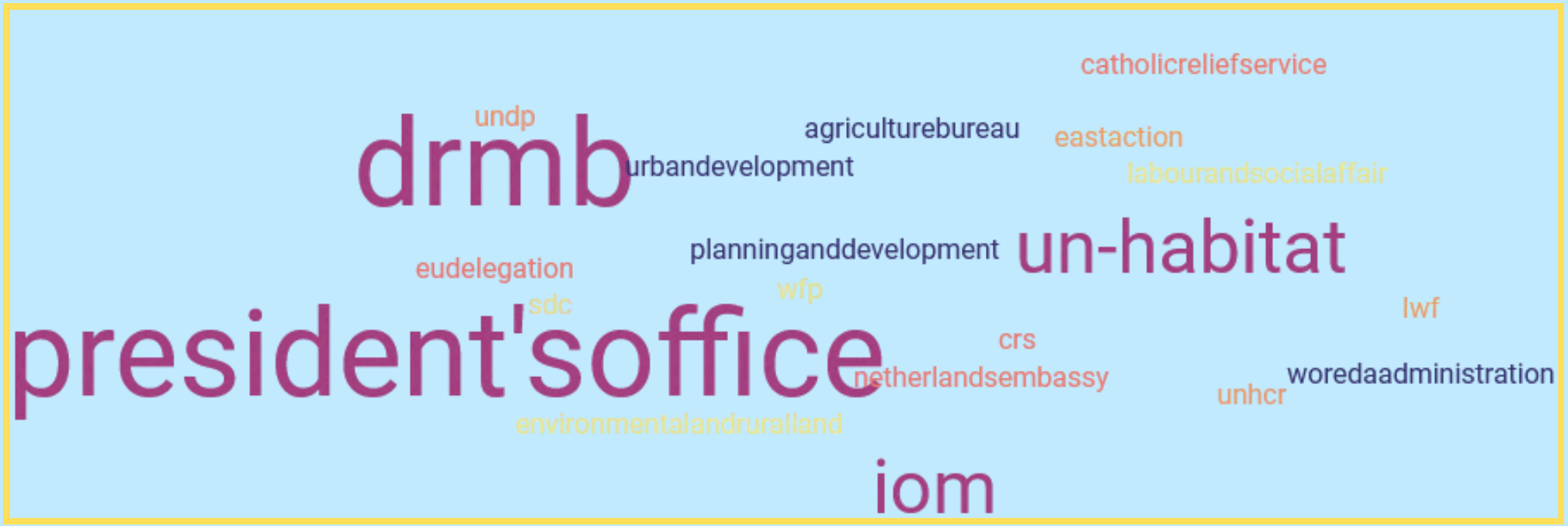
Somali President's Office:

- Reiterated strong commitment to the project's goals.
- With expertise in settlement planning & urbanization, UN-Habitat is instrumental in shaping a grounded & forward-looking approach to Qoloji's integration.
- The Region stands ready to lead, and calls on all partners in turning Qoloji into a beacon of resilience.

Next steps

1. **Refine findings with inputs gathered from the consultative workshop.**
2. **Conduct a technical workshop in Jigjiga with relevant sectoral agencies of the Somali regional state to align interventions with regional priorities and sectoral plans.**
3. **Hold a secondary validation workshop in Jigjiga to confirm accuracy, relevance, and secure buy-in from local authorities and stakeholders.**
4. **Facilitate local and regional government–led consultations with communities to ensure that IDP integration strategies reflect local needs, priorities, and capacities.**
5. **Embed the Humanitarian–Development–Peace (HDP) Nexus by linking immediate humanitarian needs with medium-term development planning and long-term peacebuilding priorities, strengthening resilience and social cohesion.**
6. **Integrate findings and stakeholder inputs into an area-based, multi-sectoral development and IDP integration plan, fully aligned with the Regional Durable Solutions Strategy, the Multi-Year Resilience Strategy, the 20-year regional governing plan, and local development frameworks.**

Participants





Survey 1: Institutional Framework Mapping

"How do you envision your organization's role in supporting the Qoloji integration process?"

Ideally





Practically

ETHIOPIA
Delivering as one

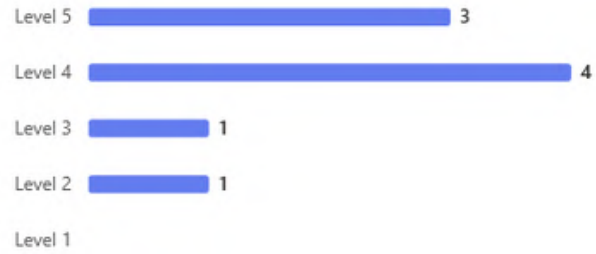
Survey 2:

Post Workshop Feedback



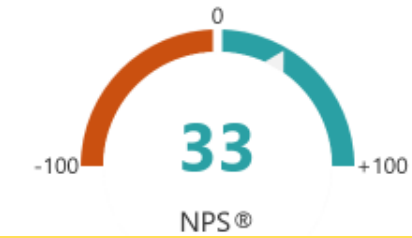
1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the event?

4.00
Average Rating



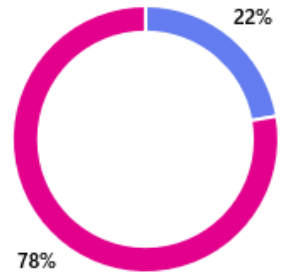
2. How likely are you to attend or recommend a follw-up Workshop?

Promoters	4
Passives	4
Detractors	1



4. Were your expectations of the event met?

Beyond my expectations	2
Met as expected	7
Below my expectations	0







Pictures





Pictures













Pictures









Pictures






Poultry farm
Livestock (concentration)
Hide & Skin collection center







Pictures

















Pictures

THANK YOU!





UN-HABITAT

thank you.

we look forward to working with you and advancing Qoloji to achieve a durable solution.

