Since the collapse of the state in 1991, Somalia has witnessed protracted civil conflict, political fragmentation and strong internal divisions. Persistent fragility has underpinned its consistently low rank on the Human Development Index (HDI). But after years of failed attempts to establish peace and undertake national reconciliation, Somalia has finally embarked on a precarious transition process. Today, amidst signs of political and economic revitalization, Somalia has established a sovereign federal government and passed a provisional constitution. It has also rallied the support of a broad coalition of regional and international partners who are committed to its security and development.

As a country in arrears, Bank financing to Somalia is restricted. Because of its flexibility, the SPF is at the heart of the Bank’s emerging role in Somalia through its support to Strategy Initiative for Somalia Re-Engagement (SISR). One of the principal ambitions of the initiative is to finance the objectives of the Interim Strategy Note (ISN) for Somalia. SISR also builds on a series of earlier SPF projects operating in Somalia since 2008.

This new interim strategy, the first of its kind since 2007, is the basis of the World Bank’s broader support to the new government in Mogadishu and project activities across the country. The ISN aims to support the country’s transition out of fragility and establish the foundations of peace, reconciliation and development. It sets out to generate national and international confidence in Somalia’s public institutions, and support early recovery efforts as well as longer-term resilience. Within the context of these objectives the SISR will provide support for seven discrete activity areas, namely analytical partnerships; governance; private sector development; information and communications technologies (ICT); public finance management (PFM); resilience partnerships and; infrastructure. The scope of the SISR is to test a range of approaches that could be scaled up through follow-on financing.

Importantly, the SISR also builds on the current SPF activities in Somalia, including the Somalia Knowledge for Operations and Political Economy Program (SKOPE). This platform aims to provide the analytical underpinnings of better-designed interventions and more transparent policy choices in Bank operations in Somalia. With additional financing from the SPF, SKOPE will be able to expand its existing activities to include support for Somalia’s New Deal Fragility Assessment and Compact, which will form the basis of the country’s international engagement. SKOPE will also enable the Bank to deliver technical assistance and facilitate policy dialogue in Mogadishu in a more flexible and demand-driven manner.

While the political and security context will be a key determinant for the scope and depth of the Bank’s support to Somalia, the implementation of the SISR will be instrumental to flexibly promote the Bank’s future engagement in the country. This new strategy initiative is a forward thinking tool designed to secure the funds and deliver the quick wins needed to maintain momentum and support Somalia’s fragile transition.

Zimbabwe’s economy suffered from an unprecedented decline between 1999 and 2008, effectively halting investment in service delivery. This has resulted in devastating impacts on the country’s once well-functioning water and sanitation systems. Severely degraded sewage systems coupled with an unreliable water supply and poorly maintained facilities eventually sparked a nationwide cholera outbreak in 2008-2009. More than a quarter of all recorded cases were recorded in the town of Beitbridge on the South African border, which sparked fears of a region-wide epidemic.

At the request of the Zimbabwean authorities, the SPF provided a USD2.65 million grant to fund the Beitbridge Emergency Water Supply and Sanitation Project. SPF support was geared towards boosting the city’s water supply as well as wastewater and solid waste management systems. It also aimed to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Beitbridge Town Council (BTC) and the Zimbabwe National Waters Authority (ZINWA) for project implementation. The SPF’s engagement in this project also provided the World Bank with the opportunity to re-engage in the water sector after an absence of almost two decades.

The project had a clear impact on water supply and sanitation services, and directly benefitted some 40,000 residents. Targeted investments in the water supply system enabled ZINWA and BTC to
In Sudan local-level conflict over access to natural resources and land is widespread. Intensified competition between pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and settled farmers has helped create an environment in which violence easily erupts. Such contexts of violence and insecurity are often made worse by weak or absent institutions, and inadequate resource management regimes to govern land rights.

At the request of the government of Sudan, the SPF approved a USD4.2 million grant to support the Peace-building for Development Project in Darfur and the Transitional Border Areas (Abyei, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states). The main objective of this project was to promote the peaceful coexistence between divergent groups through improving livelihood opportunities and promoting mutual understanding. It was organized around two main components: 1) peacebuilding, and 2) livelihood support.

In close collaboration with community-based organizations, a series of peace conferences were held to bring different communities together for discussions on issues of common interest, such as livestock migration routes and the use of water points. These talks resulted in the demarcation of 875 kilometers of livestock migration routes, along which 47 water points were provided. To reinforce these encouraging results, 12 multipurpose development centers were constructed and equipped. These centers provide training and resources for income-generating activities to the communities. Particular attention was given to youth, women and internally displaced people (IDPs) who are trained in cheese making, animal traction, food processing and extension services.

To date, more than 1,200 women, youths and IDPs have received training and tools for income generation. The project has also enabled partnerships between different communities and given a voice to vulnerable and marginalized groups due to the project. Regional governments in areas covered by the project have taken a keen interest in the activities and provided counterpart funds worth USD2.5 million. Such contributions are a positive indicator of authorities’ commitment to peaceful coexistence, fair management of land and resources and the constructive resolution of disputes. They are also a testament to the valued and effective contributions of the SPF to peacebuilding and livelihood support in Sudan.