



Report on:

Round table discussion on the critical role of the Somali media in
advancing public awareness and informed reporting on
production sector

(Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery)

Organized By: Magan Forum

Location: Mogadishu, Somalia

Date: 6/5/2026

Participants: 30 (Media, Influencers, Experts)

Roundtable Forum

A report on the proceedings, findings, challenges, and commitments emerging from the Magan Forum roundtable discussion with media executives and social media influencers on the role of media in promoting Somalia's production sector (agriculture, livestock, and fishery).



Executive Summary

Magan Forum convened a roundtable dialogue bringing together 30 Somalia media executives, to explore how Somalia's media ecosystem can more actively promote the country's production sector: agriculture, livestock, and fisheries. The discussion was recognized by all participants as highly relevant and timely, set against the backdrop of Somalia's deepening food security crisis, the global disruptions caused by the 2026 Iran war, and a systemic under-coverage of the domestic production sector in Somali media.

Participants unanimously agreed that the production sector warrants far greater media attention and pledged to create dedicated content spotlighting both achievements and challenges within the sector. The discussion surfaced two interconnected sets of challenges: those facing the production sector itself (especially the high cost of electricity and the theft of business ideas if media presents), and those facing the media in covering it (lack of sector knowledge, equipment quality, source access, and security constraints).

Magan Forum commitment to serve as a content resource and source bridge was warmly received and formally acknowledged by all participants.



1: Event Overview

Purpose, format, and participation

Event Name	Roundtable Discussion on Role of Media in Creating Content on Somalia's Production Sector (Agriculture, Livestock, Fishery)
Organizer	Magan Forum
Format	Roundtable discussion (interactive, open-floor format)
Location	Mogadishu, Somalia
Date	6/5/2026
Sectors Addressed	Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Energy
Primary Objective	Engage media and influencers to increase coverage of Somalia's domestic production sector, drive public awareness, and encourage investment in food sovereignty

The roundtable was designed as an interactive, participant-led dialogue rather than a one-directional briefing. Magan Forum facilitated the session, presenting contextual data on the production sector and opening the floor to frank discussion on barriers, opportunities, and practical collaboration. The open format encouraged candid exchanges and resulted in substantive commitments from all participants.

Context: Somali Media Landscape

Somalia media is one of the most complex and fastest-evolving in Africa. The country has around 50–60 radio stations. Radio remaining the dominant medium due to high oral culture traditions, literacy constraints, and cost effectiveness. Television is largely an urban phenomenon, limited by low electricity access and income levels. However, digital media is growing rapidly, driven by mobile internet penetration, with Somalia ranking first in Africa for mobile data affordability.

Despite this growing media infrastructure, coverage of the production sector; agriculture, livestock, and fishery, remains thin, episodic, and almost exclusively crisis-framed. Opportunity-oriented storytelling about the sector is virtually absent from mainstream Somali media output.

2: Discussion Proceedings: Key themes, exchanges, and points of consensus

The session opened with Magan Forum's facilitation team presenting the central proposition: that Somalia's production sector, responsible for approximately 65% of GDP, employing 65% of the workforce, and comprising 57 million livestock animals, receives coverage that is radically disproportionate to its economic significance. Participants were presented with the stark contrast between Somalia's agricultural potential (8.9 million hectares of arable land; three major river systems spanning 2,500 km) and the country's dependence on food imports, which stands at approximately 90% of total food consumption.

The discussion that followed was unanimously described by participants as highly relevant, timely, and important in the context of multiple converging crises: the ongoing food insecurity emergency, the 2026 global disruptions to food supply chains arising from the Iran war and Hormuz Strait shipping disruptions, and the longstanding structural underinvestment in domestic production.

"The topic of this discussion could not be more relevant. Somalia sits on one of the most under covered economic stories in Africa, and the people in this room have the power to change that." — Sentiment expressed by multiple participants during opening discussion

Consensus

All 30 participants agreed that the production sector topic is critically important and directly relevant to the current economic and humanitarian crises facing Somalia.

Editorial Approach

Balance of achievement and challenge. Participants collectively emphasized the need to tell both the achievement stories of domestic producers and the challenges they face, rejecting a purely crisis-framed narrative in favor of solutions journalism.

Context

Sector invisibility in current media. Participants acknowledged that coverage of agriculture, livestock, and fishery is overwhelmingly absent from mainstream and digital Somali media, despite the sector's outsized economic role.

Commitment

All media executives and social media influencers present formally agreed and committed to creating content focused on Somalia's production sector, beginning with their own platforms and audiences.



3: Challenges Facing the Production Sector

Participants highlighted that any credible media coverage of the production sector must honestly represent the structural challenges producers face. Two challenges were specifically underlined as particularly acute and in urgent need of public and policy attention.

1. High Cost of Electricity

Access to electricity is a critical constraint for Somali agricultural, fishery and livestock producers. Somalia has no national power grid and relies almost entirely on privately operated diesel generators. This results in some of the highest electricity tariffs in Africa, ranging from \$0.40 to \$1.25 per kWh depending on the region, compared to \$0.15/kWh in Kenya and \$0.06/kWh in Ethiopia.

Fewer than 9% of nomadic and pastoral herders have access to reliable electricity. Rural agricultural areas operate largely without power, limiting the use of irrigation pumps, cold storage, processing equipment, and digital communication tools. As of 2023, overall national electricity access stood at approximately 50.3%, with urban access at 80% and rural access at only 39%.

2. Theft of Business Ideas and Intellectual Property

Participants drew attention to an underreported problem that inhibits entrepreneurship in the production sector: the theft and copying of business ideas before they can be properly established. In a context with weak intellectual property frameworks, limited business registration systems, and a clan-based economic culture, innovative producers frequently find their concepts replicated by better-resourced actors before they can scale.

This creates a chilling effect on agricultural innovation and discourages producers from publicizing their work, which in turn contributes directly to the media coverage gap, as promising entrepreneurs refuse media exposure for fear of exposing their ideas. Strengthening business registration, intellectual property awareness, and producer cooperatives were proposed as partial remedies.

Structural Context: Why These Challenges Compound Each Other

The electricity cost crisis and the business idea theft problem interact in a damaging cycle. Without affordable power, producers cannot invest in mechanization, processing, or cold chain infrastructure that would differentiate their products, making them more vulnerable to cheap imitation. Meanwhile, the fear of idea theft discourages producers from seeking media visibility, which in turn perpetuates the under coverage of the sector and limits investor awareness.



4: Challenges Facing Media in Covering the Production Sector

Self-identified barriers from media executives and influencers

Participants from the media and influencer community brought to the table a frank set of challenges that limit their capacity to produce content on Somalia's production sector. These were not presented as excuses but as structural barriers requiring coordinated solutions. Magan Forum's commitments, detailed in Section 5, were designed directly in response to these barriers.

1. Lack of Sector Knowledge Among Media Workers

Journalists and content creators working in Somali media are overwhelmingly trained in political reporting, conflict coverage, and general news, not agricultural, livestock, or fishery economics. The result is a technical knowledge gap that makes confident, credible reporting on production sector topics difficult. Participants called for structured capacity-building programs, sector briefings, and journalist training specifically tailored to agricultural journalism. This gap is consistent with broader documented weaknesses in Somali journalism: the profession suffers from "intimidation, low pay, and lack of training" across all topic areas.

2. Equipment Quality and Technical Constraints

Many Somali media organizations, particularly those operating outside Mogadishu, face significant equipment deficits. The quality of cameras, editing software, audio equipment, and production infrastructure limits the quality of content that can be produced for field reporting in rural agricultural zones. In a digital media environment increasingly driven by high-quality video, with the Reuters Institute's 2025 Digital News Report confirming a global "move to video and platform-led content", equipment limitations constrain Somali media's competitive capacity.

3. Lack of Access to Production Sector Sources

Participants consistently identified the unavailability of sector sources as a major barrier. Farmers, herders, and fishers are frequently reluctant to speak to media, partly due to cultural reticence, partly due to fear of the business idea theft problem identified in Section 3, and partly due to a lack of established relationships between media institutions and producer communities. The absence of a structured source database or producer network accessible to journalists means that media workers must start from scratch on every story, making production sector coverage disproportionately expensive in time and resources.

4. Insecurity: Restricted Access to Agricultural Zones

This was identified as the most structurally intractable barrier. A large proportion of Somalia's most productive agricultural land, concentrated in Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Bay, Bakool, and the Jubba Valley, falls within areas of active Al-Shabaab presence or contested control. Al-Shabaab "uses routes in these areas to tax local traders and move fighters, finance and weapons." The group has also "actively obstructed government and humanitarian operations" and leverages control over water and natural resources to exert pressure on farming communities. As a result, field reporting from the most agriculturally significant parts of the country is either impossible or requires security resources that most media organizations do not possess.



5: Commitments & Agreements

The roundtable discussion concluded with a series of substantive, forward-looking commitments from both the participant groups and Magan Forum. These commitments represent the operational output of the meeting and will form the basis of the Magan Forum Media Partnership Program.

Committed By	Commitment	Status
All Media Executives (28)	Agreed to create and publish content on Somalia's production sector: agriculture, livestock, and fisheries, across their respective platforms and outlets	Confirmed
All SM Influencers (2)	Committed to producing social media content spotlighting domestic producers, entrepreneurial success stories, and investment opportunities in the production sector	Confirmed
All Participants	Agreed to present production sector stories with balance, highlighting achievements alongside challenges, to inspire public confidence and attract investment rather than reinforce crisis narratives	Confirmed
Magan Forum	Committed to proactively connecting media organizations with verified, willing sources across the agriculture, livestock, and fishery sectors, building a curated producer source network accessible to all media partners	In Progress
Magan Forum	Agreed to share all existing recorded content on the production sector with media partners, and to continue producing new audio-visual content	In Progress

that media organizations can use, broadcast, or adapt

Magan Forum

Will explore partnerships with media capacity-building organizations to provide training for journalists on agricultural and production sector reporting

Planned

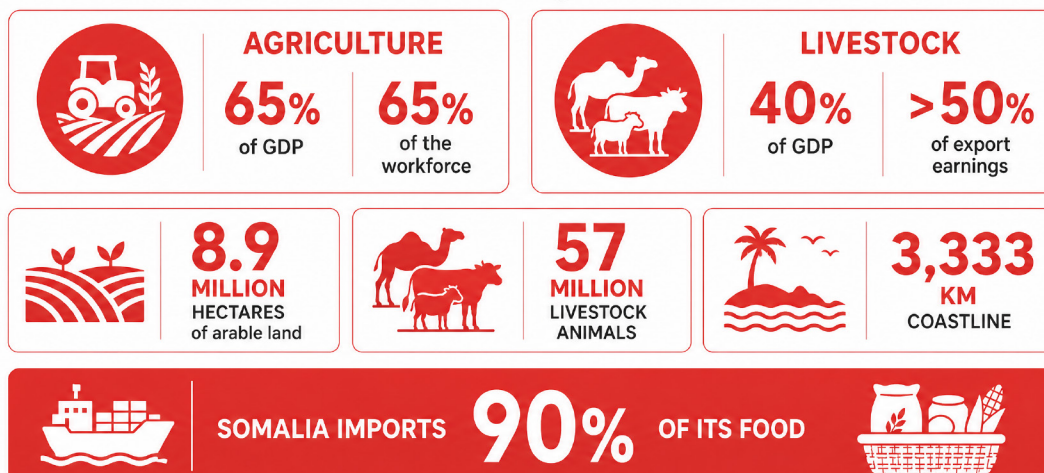
"We highly appreciate the commitment made by Magan Forum to help us find sufficient sources of information. This is exactly what has been missing, and it will change how we cover this sector." — Media executive participant, closing session



6: Background Context: Why this roundtable matters now

Somalia's Production Sector: Scale & Significance

Somalia's Production Sector: Scale & Significance



Agriculture contributes approximately 65% of Somalia's GDP and employs 65% of the workforce. Livestock alone accounts for 40% of GDP and more than 50% of all export earnings. Somalia has 8.9 million hectares of arable land, 57 million livestock animals, and a coastline of 3,333 km, the longest in Africa. Yet the country imports approximately 90% of its food and generates near-zero revenue from its fishery sector. The gap between productive potential and actual output represents one of the most significant economic development opportunities on the continent.

Food Security Emergency



Somalia is ranked the #1 hungriest country in the world by the 2025 Global Hunger Index, with 53.2% of the population undernourished. Over 3.4 million people are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or worse, and 1.7 million children under five are acutely malnourished. The 2025 Humanitarian Response Plan required \$1.42 billion and is only 12.4% funded. In this context, increasing domestic food production is not merely an economic goal, it is a humanitarian imperative.

The Iran War & Global Supply Chain Disruptions (2026)



The conflict involving Iran, which began in February 2026, has disrupted Strait of Hormuz shipping by over 70%, triggering a global fertilizer supply shock (+26–30% price increase), oil price spikes above \$120/barrel, and a 20% rise in Somalia's food import costs. The disruption has added an average of 25 days to humanitarian aid delivery routes. Somalia's 90% food import dependence has made it acutely exposed to these shocks, dramatically elevating the urgency of building domestic production capacity.

Security Context

Al-Shabaab remains a significant presence across south-central Somalia's most fertile agricultural regions. In July 2025, the group regained key areas in Lower and Middle Shabelle, Hiran, and central Somalia. The group actively taxes farmers and herders, controls water access points, and obstructs both humanitarian and economic access. An estimated 6.9 million Somalis require humanitarian assistance, with insecurity cited as a primary driver. This security landscape directly shapes both the production sector's challenges and the media's ability to report on it.



7: Recommendations: Actions arising from roundtable discussion findings

- **Establish a Production Sector Media Desk:** Magan Forum to create a dedicated media liaison function, a curated database of producer sources, story ideas, and statistics, freely accessible to all media partners.
- **Capacity Building for Journalists:** Develop and implement training programs for journalists focused on agricultural and production sector reporting, including technical knowledge and best practices for engaging with producers.
- **Facilitate Access to Sources:** Magan Forum to actively bridge the gap between media organizations and producers, building a network of verified, willing sources and facilitating direct engagement.
- **Support Equipment and Technology:** Explore partnerships and initiatives to provide media organizations with access to better equipment and technology for field reporting in rural agricultural zones.
- **Advocate for IP Protection:** Raise awareness and advocate for stronger intellectual property frameworks and business registration systems to protect innovative producers from idea theft.
- **Promote Balanced Storytelling:** Encourage media to adopt a solutions-oriented approach, highlighting both achievements and challenges within the production sector to inspire confidence and attract investment.
- **Address Insecurity Challenges:** Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to explore safe and effective ways for media to access and report from agriculturally significant but insecure regions.

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