

# **I.N.FORMA.L**

**I**struire **N**ormare **F**ormare **L**avorare

**I.N.FORMA.L. - Educate, Regulate, Train, Work.**

**From the informal to the formal economy for inclusive growth,  
peace and social dialogue in Somalia - AID 012590/03/0**

**Proceedings of the seminar**  
**Decent Work and Social Dialogue**  
**for a Democratic Transition and Peace in Somalia**  
Rome, 27 January 2026





### **Italian Agency for Development Cooperation**

Web site: [www.aics.gov.it](http://www.aics.gov.it)

Facebook: [Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo](https://www.facebook.com/agenziaitaliana)

X: [AICS Cooperazione it](https://twitter.com/AICS_Cooperazione_it)

Instagram: [aics\\_cooperazione\\_it](https://www.instagram.com/aics_cooperazione_it)

YouTube: [Aics Cooperazione](https://www.youtube.com/AicsCooperazione)



### **Nexus ER**

Web site: [www.nexusemiliaromagna.org](http://www.nexusemiliaromagna.org)

Facebook: [Nexus Emilia Romagna](https://www.facebook.com/NexusEmiliaRomagna)

X: [ONGNexus](https://twitter.com/ONGNexus)

YouTube: [Nexus ONG](https://www.youtube.com/NexusONG)



### **Confederazione Italiana Generale del Lavoro**

(Italian General Confederation of Labour)

Web site: [www.cgil.it](http://www.cgil.it)

Facebook: [CGIL Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro](https://www.facebook.com/CGILConfederazioneGeneraleItalianadelLavoro)

X: [CGIL Nazionale](https://twitter.com/CGILNazionale)

Instagram: [Cgil Nazionale](https://www.instagram.com/CgilNazionale)

YouTube: [Collettiva](https://www.youtube.com/Collettiva)



### **Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale**

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation)

Web site: [www.esteri.it](http://www.esteri.it)

Facebook: [Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale](https://www.facebook.com/MinisteroDegliAffariEsterieDellaCooperazioneInternazionale)

X: [ItalyMFA](https://twitter.com/ItalyMFA)

Instagram: [italymfa](https://www.instagram.com/italymfa)

YouTube: [MinisteroEsteri](https://www.youtube.com/MinisteroEsteri)

Linkedin: [Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale](https://www.linkedin.com/company/MinisteroDegliAffariEsterieDellaCooperazioneInternazionale)



**I.N.FORMA.L. - Educate, Regulate, Train, Work**  
From the informal to the formal economy for inclusive growth,  
peace and social dialogue in Somalia - AID 012590/03/0

---

**Proceedings of the seminar**  
**Decent Work and Social Dialogue**  
**for a Democratic Transition**  
**and Peace in Somalia**  
**Rome, 27 January 2026**

---

**Edited by**  
**Laura Ailano**  
**Nexus Emilia Romagna ETS**

---

**January 2026**

## Acknowledgements

---

The realization of the seminar “Decent Work and Social Dialogue for a Democratic Transition and Peace in Somalia,” held on 27 January 2026 in Rome, was made possible thanks to the contribution and active participation of numerous representatives from the trade union world, institutions, the private sector, and civil society.

Sincere thanks go to Marco Trovato, Editorial Director of Africa Rivista, who moderated the meeting, guiding the discussion with competence and sensitivity, contributing to providing an in-depth and non-stereotyped view of Somali reality.

We thank Fiorella Prodi, President of Nexus Emilia Romagna, Pier Mario Daccò Coppi, Italian Ambassador to Somalia, Joel Akhator Odigie, Secretary-General of ITUC Africa, and Claudia Braconi from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, for opening the event with interventions that placed the topic of decent work and social dialogue in a broad, international, and strategic perspective.

Special thanks are extended to Abdulrazak Mohamed Ibrahim from FESTU and Rita Tassoni from Nexus Emilia Romagna for clearly retracing the main stages of the project and accurately reporting the results achieved over the three years of implementation, highlighting challenges, learnings, and perspectives.

To Omar Faruq Osman from the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU), Suada Moallim Abdullahi from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Somalia, and Abdirashid Ali Ainanshe from the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry, for sharing analyses, experiences, and visions that enriched the discussion, reflecting the complexity of the process of formalization and strengthening of social dialogue in Somalia.

Thanks go to Salvatore Marra, Coordinator of the European and International Policies Area of CGIL, for the conclusions that were able to bring the debate back to the value of international trade union cooperation as a tool for building peace and democratic strengthening.

A further acknowledgement goes to Mabel Grossi, CGIL International Department, for her contribution to the realization of the initiative and for the organizational support in the preparation of the seminar.

Finally, thanks are extended to Simona Zedda for the editing work on the present publication, which contributed to carefully shaping its drafting and final form.

The seminar and this publication are the result of joint work by Nexus Emilia Romagna, CGIL and FESTU, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Somalia (MOLSA), Somali National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), and International Trade Union Confederation Africa (ITUC/CSI Africa), with the support of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), within the I.N.FORMA.L project (AID 012590/03/0).

We sincerely thank all the people who contributed to organizing the event and implementing this process.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	6
<hr/>	
<b>Seminar presentations “Decent Work and Social Dialogue for a Democratic Transition and Peace in Somalia”</b>	
<b>Introduction and opening</b>	
Marco Trovato – Event moderator, Editorial Director of Africa Rivista .....	7
<b>TRADE UNION COOPERATION AND DECENT WORK</b>	
Fiorella Prodi – President of Nexus Emilia Romagna .....	7
<b>THE ROLE OF ITALIAN COOPERATION</b>	
Pier Mario Daccò Coppi – Italian Ambassador to Somalia .....	7
<b>DEMOCRACY AND TRADE UNION SPACE IN AFRICA</b>	
Joel Akhator Odigie – Segretario Generale CSI Africa .....	8
<b>DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION COMMITMENT</b>	
Claudia Braconi – Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) .....	8
<b>Video Screening – “In the Nets of Mogadishu” Reportage</b> by Marco Trovato, Editorial Director of Africa Rivista .....	9
<b>I.N.FORMA.L PROJECT RESULTS</b>	
Abdulrazak Mohammed Ibrahim – I.N.FORMA.L Project Coordinator for FESTU .....	9
Rita Tassoni – I.N.FORMA.L Project Coordinator for Nexus Emilia Romagna ETS .....	10
<b>DEMOCRACY AND WORK IN SOMALI TRANSITION</b>	
Omar Faruk Osman – Secretary-General FESTU .....	12
<b>INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE</b>	
Suada Moallim Abdullahi – Director of Labour Relations, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) .....	13
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE</b>	
Abdirashid Ali Ainanshe – Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry .....	13
<b>CONCLUDING REMARKS</b>	
Salvatore Marra – CGIL .....	14
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	15

## Introduction



The seminar “Decent Work and Social Dialogue for a Democratic Transition and Peace in Somalia” represented **the concluding moment of the I.N.FORMA.L project** – Instruct, Regulate, Train, Work. From informal to formal for inclusive growth, peace, and social dialogue in Somalia AID 012590/03/0 – promoted by Nexus Emilia-Romagna in collaboration with the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL), Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Somalia (MOLSA), Somali National Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) and ITUC CSI Africa, funded by AICS – Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

The meeting was not only a simple **presentation of project results** but a space for **political and institutional discussion** on the deep connection between work, democracy, and peace. In a context such as Somalia, marked by structural fragility but also by concrete signs of economic and institutional transformation, **the formalization of work** assumes **a strategic value**: not only as a tool for protecting rights, but as an essential lever for the stabilization and reconstruction of the State.

Through the contribution of **trade union, institutional, private sector, and civil society representatives**, it became clear that democratic transition cannot be separated from the strengthening of social dialogue and the effective recognition of workers’ rights. **The fight against informality** emerged not as a merely technical or administrative matter, but as **a political and social process** involving institutions, social partners, and local communities.

**The proceedings of the seminar** collect and systematize the main contents emerged during the debate, reflecting **the plurality of perspectives** and **the strategic directions** outlined for the future.

## Seminar presentations “Decent Work and Social Dialogue for a Democratic Transition and Peace in Somalia”

### Introduction and opening

**Marco Trovato – Event Moderator, Editorial Director of Africa Rivista**

The opening of the seminar was dedicated to the need **to overcome a reductive narrative of Somalia**, often associated exclusively with conflict and insecurity. A more articulated reading of the country was proposed, recognized as **a strategic actor in the Horn of Africa** and a crossroads of significant geopolitical interests, but also as a context undergoing **institutional reconstruction and economic transformation**.

From the beginning, Marco Trovato clarified the guiding thread of the meeting: decent work, rights, participation, and peace are not separate areas, but closely interdependent dimensions of democratic transition.

### TRADE UNION COOPERATION AND DECENT WORK

**Fiorella Prodi – President of Nexus Emilia Romagna**

**The identity of Nexus Emilia Romagna** as a cooperation institute promoted by **CGIL Emilia-Romagna** was highlighted, underlining its **trade union roots** and its approach based on building skills, autonomy, and equal relationships.

**The I.N.FORMA.L project** was framed within **SDG 8 of the 2030 Agenda**, dedicated to decent work and inclusive growth. The adopted approach was based on a preliminary analysis of **needs**, investment in **training**, support for the **formalization** of micro and small enterprises, and promotion of **social dialogue** among institutions, trade unions, and employer representatives. Thanks to the project, formalization was presented not as a mere administrative requirement, but as a lever for access to rights, **social protection**, and **economic stability**.

### THE ROLE OF ITALIAN COOPERATION

**Pier Mario Daccò Coppi – Italian Ambassador to Somalia**

During the institutional intervention, **the depth of the bond between Italy and Somalia** was highlighted, not limited to a historical dimension but oriented toward cooperation and partnership perspectives.

The progressive **institutional strengthening of the country** and the importance of supporting regulatory reforms, state tools, and financial mechanisms capable of accompanying **the formalization of the economy** and **productive inclusion** were emphasized. Availability for dialogue with social partners and support for stabilization pathways based on economic development and rights was also reiterated.

## **DEMOCRACY AND TRADE UNION SPACE IN AFRICA**

**Joel Akhator Odigie – Secretary-General ITUC Africa**

The analysis was framed within a **broader context**, recalling **African and global dynamics** marked by economic instability, geopolitical pressures, and shrinking democratic spaces.

It was reiterated that **democracy** cannot be limited to the formal dimension of institutions but must translate into effective **access to social and labor rights**. In a continent characterized by a young and rapidly growing population, **the lack of employment opportunities** represents a risk factor for social stability.

Within this framework, **the I.N.FORMA.L project** was valued for having strengthened **social dialogue spaces** and initiated **concrete tools** to address informality, a structural element of economic fragility. The centrality of **multilateralism** and social investment as pillars of lasting peace was also emphasized.



## **DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION COMMITMENT**

**Claudia Braconi – Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)**

The intervention dedicated to development cooperation highlighted **the multi-actor approach** promoted by Italian cooperation, based on the involvement of civil society, institutions, universities, and the private sector.

Decent work was defined as a complex and articulated concept, including not only **wages and safety**, but also **rights**, representation, and participation in decision-making processes. Emphasis was placed on **the sustainability of results** and the need to generate structural changes in the medium-long term.

## Video Screening – “In the Nets of Mogadishu” Reportage, by Marco Trovato, Editorial Director of Africa Rivista

The video-reportage dedicated to **the economic life of Mogadishu** offered a concrete snapshot of the resilience of workers, highlighting the central role of sectors such as fishing in **a still fragile but transforming context**.

### ▶ Video link

## I.N.FORMA.L PROJECT RESULTS



### Abdulrazak Mohammed Ibrahim – I.N.FORMA.L Project Coordinator for FESTU

Abdulrazak Mohammed Ibrahim retraced **the project path**, started in 2021, highlighting **the difficulties** related to a largely informal economy and poor knowledge of registration procedures.

Research on the informal economy and awareness activities – territorial meetings, media interventions, dialogue with communities and workers – contributed to creating **an informative and political base** useful for promoting formalization tools and strengthening dialogue among social partners.

This work took place during a period of profound change in the Somali regulatory framework, culminating after more than fifty years in **the adoption of a modernized**

**labor code**, signed by the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. **A reform of historic significance**, the result of constructive social dialogue and of **tripartite negotiations** between the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU), the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which made it possible to align national legislation with **international labour standards** and to integrate into domestic law the main **ILO Conventions** ratified by Somalia. Another qualifying dimension of the intervention was **the strengthening of tripartite dialogue**, which found a concrete expression in the signing of **the National Action Plan** on 31/05/2025 and in its subsequent official presentation in Geneva during the 113th International Labour Conference (2–13 June 2025). On that occasion, the Tripartite Committee of the I.N.FORMA.L project announced its adoption as a strategic instrument to support the transition **from the informal economy to the formal one**.



### **Rita Tassoni – I.N.FORMA.L Project Coordinator for Nexus Emilia Romagna ETS**

The coordinator focused on **the methodological setup** of the intervention to better understand the main results of the I.N.FORMA.L program, highlighting that in a context where informality prevails, **the shift to formality** was conceived as a **gradual, accompanied**, and supported process. Data collected showed that many micro and small enterprises lacked **adequate information** on **registration** procedures and **rights and duties** related to formality.

An introduction followed on the localization and **sectors of intervention** (fishing, textiles, and small trade); areas characterized by a high incidence of informal work and significant presence of women and youth.

The goal was to strengthen entire productive segments, promoting emergence, protection, and representation. The intervention was articulated on complementary levels: **technical and regulatory training; personalized support for regularization;** distribution of **toolkits** composed of equipment and procedural manuals; production and dissemination of **data and analysis** to support social dialogue and the definition of **a national Action Plan**, as well as the ILO guidance manual *“Advancing Decent Work and Labour Standards in Somalia: A Practical Guide for Implementing ILO Conventions”* conceived as an operational tool supporting the application of **ILO Conventions No. 144** (Tripartite Consultation and Social Dialogue), **No. 190** (Violence and Harassment in the World of Work), and **Nos. 187 & 155** (Occupational Health and Safety) in Somalia, offering practical guidance and technical references to translate international standards into concrete measures.

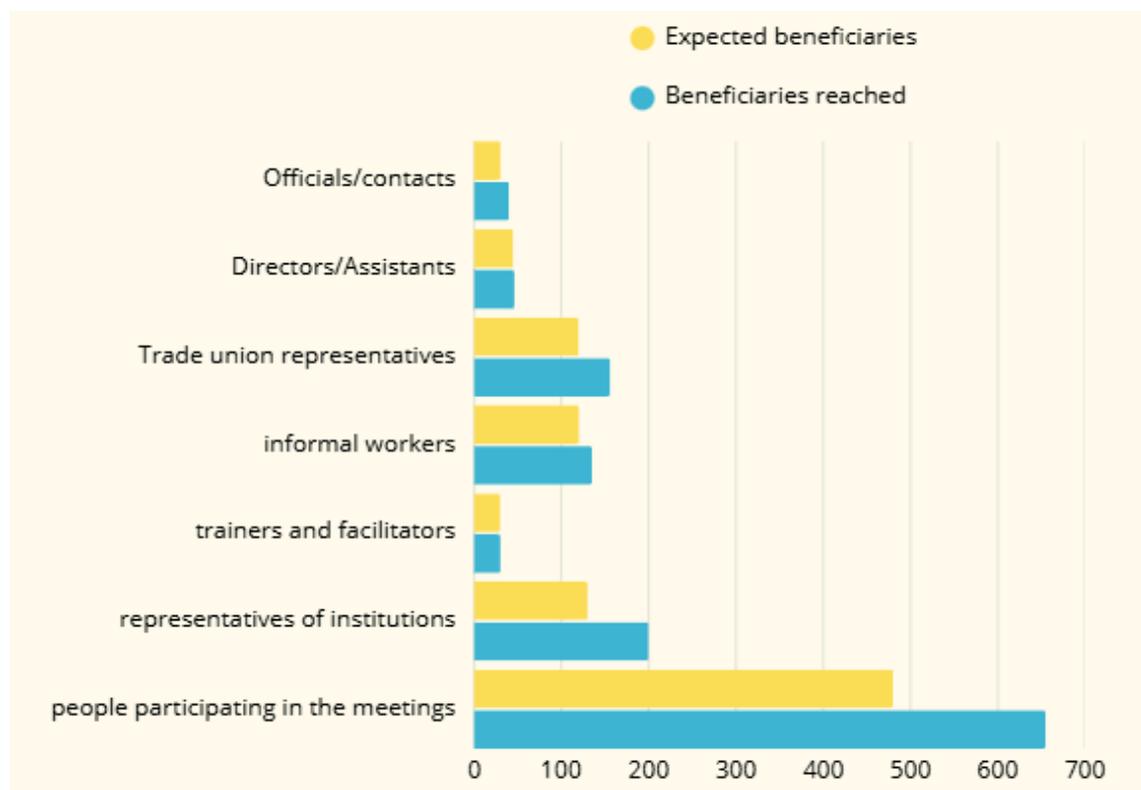
The intervention concluded with charts showing how **quantitative results** exceeded initial targets, both in terms of beneficiaries trained and supported and **female participation**, which stood at around 43–45%, a particularly significant figure in the context. Parallel territorial campaigns, round tables, workplace meetings, and communication tools helped disseminate the narrative of formalization as an opportunity for protection and growth.

Sector	Women	Men	Total	% Women
Textile	20	25	45	44,44
Fishing	18	27	45	40
Small Trade	20	25	45	44,44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>42,96</b>

Beneficiaries, of which 58 women (43%) and 77 men (57%), received professional training to transmit fundamental skills to improve business practices and guide them through the formalization process.

Sector	Women	Men	Total	% Women
Textile	6	9	<b>15</b>	40
Fishing	5	25	<b>30</b>	17
Small Trade	12	8	<b>20</b>	60
<b>TOTALE</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>35</b>

Beneficiaries, of which 23 women (35%) and 42 men (65%), received pilot support paths for formalization, management, and development of micro-enterprises.



Total beneficiaries reached by the project, in addition to a total of 1,600 people reached through TV/radio broadcasts/debates and 6,000 people reached through the photo contest “Decent and Inclusive Work.”

Another noteworthy aspect of the project was the work on **tripartite dialogue**, culminating in the signing of **the National Action Plan** on 31/05/2025 and subsequently presented publicly in Geneva during **the 113th International Labour Conference** (2–13 June 2025), where the Tripartite Committee of the I.N.FORMA.L project **officially announced** its adoption **as a strategic tool** for the transition from informal to formal economy in Somalia: a step of strong symbolic and political value, indicative of the concrete possibility **to activate consultation mechanisms** between institutions, trade unions, and employer representatives even in a complex context.

## **DEMOCRACY AND WORK IN SOMALI TRANSITION**

**Omar Faruk Osman – Secretary-General FESTU**

Democratic transition was defined not as a simple passage among elites or a formal process tied to institutions, but as a concrete verification of the population’s living conditions. **The quality of democracy** was directly linked to the possibility for workers to live and operate in conditions of **safety, dignity, and protection**. Democracy becomes substantial when people can organize freely, when trade unions are recognized as legitimate interlocutors, and when the voice of labor is heard in decision-making processes.

The centrality of **tripartite social dialogue** between the **Ministry of Labour, Chamber of Commerce, and FESTU** was emphasized. Not a symbolic consultation, but a structured space capable of preventing conflicts, building mutual trust, and generating “**social peace**,” which is indispensable for broader and lasting peace. Positive signals on the institutional level, such as more inclusive electoral processes, only have full meaning if accompanied by strengthened labor participation. Without **a voice in workplaces**, full **citizenship in society** is difficult to exercise.

Attention was focused on **Somalia’s structural economic issue**: an **informal economy** rate exceeding 90%, resulting in absence of regular contracts, lack of social protection, high health and safety risks, and limited legal protection. In this context, **reforming and updating labor regulations** is essential, but effectiveness depends on **concrete application** through functioning inspection systems, enforcement mechanisms, and institutions capable of ensuring rights.

Formalization was presented as **a gradual but decisive path**: not a bureaucratic imposition, but a tool to strengthen rights, social cohesion, and economic stability. Supporting workers and enterprises toward formality means expanding the **tax base**, **consolidating institutions**, and creating **more equitable conditions** for competition and development.

## **INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

**Suada Moallim Abdullahi – Director of Labour Relations, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA)**

Government priorities included **modernizing labor legislation**, strengthening competent **institutions**, and investing in **vocational training**, with special attention to **youth**. Willingness to consolidate **international cooperation** to support formalization of the informal economy, leveraging project data and tools, was reiterated.

## **PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE**

**Abdirashid Ali Ainanshe – Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

From the employer perspective, **the inseparability between peace, democracy, and economic opportunity** was highlighted. The private sector was described as an actor contributing to economic stability even during critical phases.

**Formalization** was presented as a strategy for stabilization and development, accompanied by **incentive tools**, credit access, skill strengthening, and adequate infrastructure, with particular attention to youth and women.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

### Salvatore Marra – CGIL

From the reflections that emerged, some fundamental directions can be outlined.

Firstly, **international trade union cooperation** is configured as a concrete tool for building **peace**: promoting labor rights, representation, and strong social institutions means strengthening **the democratic foundations of a country**.

Secondly, the importance of **multilateralism** and **international law** as a framework for protection and legitimacy was reaffirmed, especially for trade union organizations operating in fragile contexts. International labor bodies represent essential spaces for protection and recognition.

Finally, **tripartism and formalization** emerge as pillars of state reconstruction. Structured dialogue between the Ministry of Labour, trade unions, and employer representatives is not merely a method of engagement, but **a democratic infrastructure** capable of generating stability, trust, and inclusive development.

The message that runs through the entire process is clear: **lasting peace cannot exist without social justice, nor can complete democracy exist without decent work**. Security is not built exclusively through military means, but by creating opportunities, work, and prospects for younger generations.

The final image evoked – a young street vendor in Mogadishu using digital payments – strongly reflects **the complexity of contemporary Somalia: fragility and innovation** coexist. Technology opens possibilities, but only strong institutions, clear rules, and guaranteed rights can make that future truly inclusive and sustainable over time.



## Conclusion

The seminar provided a **detailed and dynamic picture of contemporary Somalia**, highlighting how the process of institutional and democratic reconstruction cannot be separated from the economic and social dimension. **Work emerged as a concrete field on which the quality of the transition** is measured: not only as a productive factor, but as a space of rights, recognition, and participation.

Through the various interventions, a shared awareness was outlined: in a context characterized by very high levels of informality, **the formalization of the economy represents a structural challenge that requires time, adequate tools, and joint responsibilities**. It is not exclusively a matter of registering businesses or updating regulations, but of building trust between institutions and citizens, strengthening skills, creating incentives, ensuring social protection, and making rights effective.

**Tripartite social dialogue** is confirmed, in this perspective, **as an essential democratic infrastructure**. The ability to bring public institutions, trade union organizations, and employer representatives to the same table not only contributes to conflict management, but also creates the conditions for more inclusive, stable, and shared labor policies. In this framework, **the I.N.FORMA.L project represented a concrete laboratory of cooperation**, capable of combining research, training, technical support, and political dialogue.

Another element that emerged strongly is the need **to overcome simplified narratives about Somalia**. Alongside the fragilities, there are signs of economic transformation, innovation, and social resilience. Recognizing this complexity also means strengthening the effectiveness of international cooperation, directing it not only towards emergency management, but towards the construction of strong and sustainable institutions over time.

The outlined path indicates a clear direction: **investing in decent work, training, participation, and shared responsibility between public and private actors** means contributing to a transition that is not only formal, but rooted in the daily lives of people. It is at this intersection of rights, development, and social dialogue that the possibility of **lasting peace and substantial democracy** is played out.

This publication was produced as part of the project

# I.N.FORMA.L

Istruire Normare Formare Lavorare

I.N.FORMA.L. - Educate, Regulate, Train, Work. From the informal to the formal economy for inclusive growth, peace and social dialogue in Somalia - AID 012590/03/0

## Project financed by

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation



Italian Agency for Development Cooperation



## Realised by

Nexus Emilia Romagna ETS



## Partner

**FESTU** - Federation of Somali Trade Unions



**MoLSA** - Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Somalia)



**SCCI** - Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Somalia)



**ITUC Africa** - African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation



## NEXUS EMILIA ROMAGNA ETS

Via Marconi 69, 40122 Bologna (Italia)

Email: [er.nexus@er.cgil.it](mailto:er.nexus@er.cgil.it)

Web site: [www.nexusemiliaromagna.org](http://www.nexusemiliaromagna.org)

Facebook: [Nexus Emilia Romagna](https://www.facebook.com/NexusEmiliaRomagna)

X: [@ONGNexus](https://twitter.com/ONGNexus)

## FESTU

KM5, Bula Hubey, Mogadishu, Somalia

Email: [info@festu.org](mailto:info@festu.org)

Web site: [www.festu.org](http://www.festu.org)

Facebook: [FESTU Somalia](https://www.facebook.com/FESTU Somalia)

X: [@festusomalia](https://twitter.com/festusomalia)

This publication was produced with the contribution of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Nexus Emilia Romagna ETS and do not necessarily represent the views of the Agency.