

## **Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia**

### **Briefing to the Security Council on Somalia**

**24 January 2018**

Mr. President

It is now almost one year since Somalia underwent a peaceful transition of power and the election of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed ‘Farmajo’.

Like many new governments, his has been through a steep learning curve. In the process, it has crafted a commendable national agenda embracing financial reform, job creation, inclusive politics, conflict resolution and reform of the security sector. The focus now is on the essential task of developing a plan for security transition.

In implementing this multi-pronged agenda, the federal government faces a number of major challenges. One is the mobilization of adequate technical and financial capacity. Another is ensuring coherent and coordinated approaches by both national and international actors. A third is success in managing the powerful constituencies that need to be on side. These include federal member states, parliamentarians, clan power brokers, the private sector and international partners.

It is encouraging, Mr. President, that following a period of tension between the Federal Government and Federal Member States late last year, the relationship has stabilised. The form and structure of Somalia’s federal system is still a matter of vigorous debate, but the renewed commitment of the Federal Government and Federal Member States to cooperate to address Somalia’s needs, is essential in order to make progress on all fronts.

Also encouraging is the improving relationship between government and the private sector, as evidenced by the passage of the Telecommunications Act, a milestone in public regulation of the economy, and by an increase in business confidence and domestic revenues.

In December, the IMF commended the Somali authorities on their progress on policy reforms and its successful completion of the country’s first Staff Monitored Programme since the end of the civil war. This is setting the country on a pathway that leads both to debt relief, increased public and private sector loans and investment, and more money for basic services and infrastructure.

Somalia’s relationship with international partners remains strong, was apparent at the Security Conference and Partnership Forum held in Mogadishu in early December, and the government believes that it needs and deserves greater financial support to implement its reform agenda, even if this involves some calculated risks by donors.

But Somali politics remain turbulent. In December, tensions were sharply raised in Mogadishu by the violent arrest by the National Intelligence and Security Agency of a prominent

opposition politician and the raid on the house of a leading parliamentarian. The recent replacement of the Mayor has also created waves.

These incidents have highlighted basic problems that need to be addressed, such as inadequate rules and safeguards governing the conduct of politics, including impeachment procedures; blurred roles and lines of accountability of the many security actors; and the perpetuation of corrupt practices and of untraceable money in the political marketplace.

Corruption is a blight, undermining reform efforts, limiting the confidence and trust of Somalis in their leaders and institutions. The effects can be seen in all areas of public life from business to politics, justice to security, playing into the hands of extremists. The government has declared its determination to develop plans to address corruption in the coming year.

In the meantime, all Somali actors need to respect the rule of law and resist the use of violence against their political opponents. Otherwise the risk is that the many positive developments underway will be overshadowed, and the Government's ability to implement its broader agenda and improve the lives of the population will be undermined.

Mr. President,

The scale of the challenges facing the country are daunting. Chronic poverty and persistent humanitarian needs cast an ominous shadow over Somalia. The risk of famine still looms after four consecutive failed rainy seasons. The 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan calls for \$1.6 billion.

While famine was averted in 2017 thanks to national leadership, collective humanitarian action and historic levels of donor support, food security needs are nearly double the five-year average, and an estimated 6.2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Malnutrition reached emergency levels in many locations and is expected to rise. Drought and conflict have displaced over 2 million people within the country, up to a million of them in the last 12 months, including many children and more than 80,000 pregnant women.

Given the recurrent nature of droughts in Somalia, an imperative is to address the root causes of Somalia's fragility and to build resilience to shocks. This is needed to prevent further refugee flows and displacement. Humanitarian interventions must be complemented by investment in job-creating public works and infrastructure.

The basis for this will be the Drought Impact Needs Assessment and Recovery and Resilience Framework being developed by the Federal Government with support from the UN, the World Bank and European Union. Continued support will be needed to help Somalia break the cycle of recurrent crises that cause so much suffering and undermine the peacebuilding and state-building process.

Central to that process is gaining political agreement as to how power will be exercised, shared and accounted for. This requires progress in three key areas: review of the Provisional Federal Constitution; preparation for elections in 2020/21; and conflict resolution and reconciliation.

The National Constitutional Convention earmarked for March/April is expected to launch the next phase of the constitutional review process, focusing on resource and power-sharing between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States, the status of Mogadishu and harmonisation of Federal and Member State constitutions.

In December 2017, the National Independent Electoral Commission launched its strategic plan to achieve universal elections. This needs sustained political support and donor funding. Registration of political parties will help stabilize politics. So far, seven have been registered, including one led by a woman. Registration is also an essential step towards holding universal elections.

Immediate priorities include the development and adoption of the Electoral Law by the Parliament, reaching agreement on the system of representation, decisions on voter registration, and ongoing capacity building and institutional development of the NIEC, including in Federal Member States.

Regarding conflict resolution and reconciliation, the federal government plans to launch a national strategy in the coming months, recognising the multifaceted nature of the many disputes and grievances in the country.

On the ground, there has been some significant progress. Since 2015, Galmudug has been split between the state authorities and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a, with the state administration displaced to Adaado. On 18 January in Dhusamareb, President Farmajo oversaw a ceremony to mark an agreement between the two to merge assemblies, constitutions and security arrangements and return the state administration to Dhusamareb, an agreement reached through political dialogue.

This bodes well for efforts to resolve other disputes including in Galkacyo. Several continue to simmer, both creating space for and distracting attention from the bigger threat posed by Al Shabaab.

There is a serious danger that long-standing disputes between Puntland and "Somaliland", and in particular an armed stand-off in Sool, could erupt into violence in the coming days, with potentially grave consequences. This comes very soon after delayed presidential elections and the orderly and peaceful transfer of power that took place in "Somaliland" late last year.

With the support of international partners including many on this Council, I have urged the leaders of Puntland and "Somaliland" to declare a cessation of hostilities, withdraw their forces, restore the status quo ante, and open channels of communication.

Mr. President,

Al Shabaab remains a potent threat, despite or perhaps because it is on the back foot as a result of financial pressures, counter terrorism operations and air strikes.

On October 14th, Mogadishu suffered the most deadly IED attack ever perpetrated, with an estimated 512 people killed, nearly all civilians.

On 10 December, UNSOM launched its first public Protection of Civilians Report covering an 18-month period to October. It documented a total of 2,078 civilians killed and 2,507 injured, the large majority of which are attributable to Al Shabaab. Al Shabaab abducted civilians, conducted targeted assassinations and summary executions. In addition, 729 civilians were abducted by Al Shabaab, of whom 403 were released.

Five days ago, SNA 'DANAB' special forces rescued 36 children from an Al Shabaab training camp, many of whom were forcibly recruited into the movement.

Defeating Al Shabaab requires both a military and political strategy, the use of both sticks and carrots, as well as sustained efforts to address deficits that lend extremists a degree of credibility. These include corruption, lack of education and job opportunities for young people, weak national justice and corrections capacity, and grievances arising from unresolved disputes.

AMISOM remains fundamental for security in the country, and can take credit for having created the space to allow Somalia's political progress over the last decade. I pay tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of its troops, and am grateful to the Troop and Police Contributing Countries for their commitment to Somalia.

AMISOM cannot stay indefinitely. 2018 will require dedicated effort by the Somali leadership, the African Union and international partners to build political acceptability and operational capability of the Somali security sector.

This should enable AMISOM gradually to hand over responsibility to Somali security forces, and to enable the federal and state governments, as per the agreements in the National Security Architecture, to exercise a monopoly over the use of force. The current situation whereby security responsibilities are fragmented, often privately controlled and unaccountable is both dangerous and untenable.

To that end, on 4 December the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States, agreed to develop a transition plan in the first quarter of this year, working closely with international partners, most importantly the African Union, Troop and Police Contributing Countries and major international investors in Somalia's security, including the European Union.

They agreed to create a conditions-based plan with clear milestones and target dates. This will be rooted in the Comprehensive Approach to Security to ensure that planning focuses not only on military handover but also on policing, rule of law and strengthening basic local

governance, all of which are essential to sustaining security gains and to the credibility of the state. This transition plan will be the basis for securing future support for Somalia's security sector, and for AMISOM.

The starting point for this plan is not ideal. The Federal Government of Somalia has undertaken an Operational Readiness Assessment of the Somali National Army and Somali Police Force, providing a much clearer understanding of their capability. These have revealed multiple deficits and the enormous challenge ahead in translating the National Security Architecture into reality on the ground.

AMISOM's continued presence will therefore be essential. Premature drawdown of AMISOM forces will be a gift to Al Shabaab and risks undermining the gains that have been made, at great human and financial cost, over the last decade.

The UN will continue to work closely with the African Union and key security investors to explore sustainable, predictable funding mechanisms for AMISOM and to support AMISOM to effectively fulfil its mandate.

Progress is being made. The 2,400 Puntland Defence Forces have been integrated into the Somali National Army, a possible model for integration in other parts of the country.

There is agreement on the allocation of police numbers for each state, for Mogadishu and the Federal Government. Each Federal Member State has developed a State Police Plan.

A harmonized Justice and Corrections Model has been endorsed by the National Security Council which provides the basis for the establishment of an independent and impartial justice system. Action plans have been developed to implement the National Strategy to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism.

The human rights situation continues to be of great concern. The rule of law is weak and capacities and mechanisms to protect and promote basic rights are lacking. Forced evictions, sexual violence and repression of freedom of expression are among many indicators, with marginalized and minority groups particularly vulnerable.

The UN is supporting the Federal Government to strengthen frameworks, institutions and measures for upholding human rights, to address impunity and improve the protection of women and children, and to take action to end the involvement of children in armed conflict. The formation of the national Human Rights Commission is a positive step forward.

Mr. President,

Somalia is making definite progress, though the risks remain real. It is fortunate to have a government that is committed to reform, to resolving conflicts and to meeting formidable social, economic and security needs of the population.

Continued progress is dependent not only on the strong political will and skill of the Federal Government, but also cooperation and partnership with Federal Member States, parliament, clan elders, business and international partners. When all of these constituencies cooperate, huge strides can be made.

I strongly encourage Somali stakeholders to unite to tackle these priorities and to make 2018 a year of implementation. Allow me to take this opportunity to encourage the international partners to continue their financial generosity, their support for strengthening technical capacities and to be transparent and coordinated in their assistance.

Thank you, Mr. President.