



United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)

Briefing to the AU Peace and Security Council by Ambassador Nicholas Kay, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Somalia

18 May 2015

[AS DELIVERED]

Excellency,

Thank you for this opportunity to brief the Peace and Security Council on Somalia. I am glad to be doing so with my friend and colleague, Ambassador Maman Sidikou. Tomorrow we will be briefing the UN Security Council together. The AU-UN partnership in Somalia is unique, strong and essential for success.

Excellency,

Let me begin by thanking the Peace and Security Council for its continued and exceptional support to the peace and state-building process in Somalia.

I am very pleased to report that, after a too-long pause, political progress has resumed again. Somalia's federal, regional and local leaders, parliamentarians, and people from all walks of life are building a federal state, step by step, through dialogue and reconciliation. The task is difficult and painstaking; but it is vital, and deserves our sustained support.

Federal President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud, as well as the Prime Minister, Speaker and the leaders of Puntland, Jubba and South West Administrations have reiterated their determination to deliver Somalia's Vision 2016 plan, without any extension of the term of the Federal Parliament or President in August and September 2016 respectively.

The Federal Government is focused on the key milestones ahead, including: completing the formation of Interim Regional Administrations and assemblies; advancing the constitutional review; standing up the National Independent Electoral Commission and Boundaries and Federation Commission; and finalizing priority legislation on political parties, citizenship, and elections.

The NIEC faces a compressed timeline to discharge its duties. Upon its establishment, the commission will need to decide swiftly on how to implement its mandate to conduct a constitutional referendum and democratic elections. The United Nations will deploy an Electoral Assessment Mission to determine, in close collaboration with stakeholders, the nature and extent

of UN electoral support in Somalia. Only after the NIEC has been able to assess the scale of its challenge will we know what is possible to be achieved by August 2016 in terms of one person one vote elections.

Excellency,

We should all acknowledge the progress Somalia is making in becoming a federal state. Very shortly, with expert assistance from IGAD, all the Interim Regional Administrations should be in place. The Interim Jubba Administration inaugurated the Regional Assembly on 7 May in Kismaayo. The Central Regions process was launched on 16 April in Adaado and is set to complete before Ramadan. The state formation process in Hiran and Middle Shabelle is shaping up. The status of Mogadishu will be addressed through national consultations during the constitutional review process. Many challenges remain – in particular ensuring inclusivity. The formation of the Jubba Regional Assembly has, for example, shown clearly the importance of achieving an inclusive and representative body. Local reconciliation efforts are critical across Somalia. Women, minorities and youth must be well represented as part of that inclusivity. The United Nations salutes the efforts of IGAD and other partners, such as the European Union, in supporting their vital political process.

Progress on the constitutional review process has not matched the progress on federalism. The resignation on 6 May of the Chairperson of the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission is an additional challenge, but there can be no let-up in moving the process forward. The United Nations is supporting the Commissioners and other relevant institutions to start the constitutional review process in earnest without any further delay.

I am also concerned about the timetable for elections in “Somaliland”, which were due next month. The recent decision by the House of Elders to postpone elections for 22 months until March 2017 is a cause for concern. The UN has joined other international partners in urging a reconciliation of this timetable based on a political consensus among all “Somaliland” stakeholders.

Excellency,

I remain concerned about security in Somalia, and about the threat posed by Al-Shabaab to the wider sub-region, demonstrated by the heinous attack on Kenya’s Garissa University in April. Counter-terrorism requires effort on many fronts: I hope that the coming weeks will see even closer cooperation among Member States to address this threat at a sub-regional level, including measures to prevent and counter violent extremism. With so much at stake between now and 2016 Al-Shabaab will do everything it can to derail the political process and will continue to target the Federal Government, the Regional Administrations, the UN, the AU and other stakeholders.

I once again pay tribute to the courage of the Somali National Army and our AMISOM colleagues. Their sacrifices will not be in vain. The AU and UN recently completed a joint mission to Somalia to assess the benchmarks for a UN peacekeeping mission; the impact of the ‘surge’ of AMISOM troops authorized in UNSCR 2124, and to provide recommendations on the next steps in the military campaign. I am aware that the mission is now at the stage of consulting with various stakeholders and that its report will be presented in due course.

But there is more to do. Al Shabaab remains dangerous, particularly in asymmetrical terms. It still needs to be dealt with. Flexible, sustained and enemy-focused offensive operations must be urgently reinitiated. This may require some reconfiguration of military forces within the ceiling, including generation of additional enablers as mission assets for the whole force.

We must do more on the civilian side as well. The mission recommended a progressive approach to engagement in the regions, based on the principle of UNSOM-AMISOM joint teams. We are jointly aiming at enhancing the stabilisation of recovered areas. The joint benchmarking mission is elaborating measures to link the military and security initiatives by Somalis, AMISOM and UNSOM, to create a conducive environment for sustained political and socio-economic activities. It is urgent that we ensure people in areas recovered from Al Shabaab begin to feel the benefits of better governance, better livelihoods, better law and order and better public services, such as health and education.

Excellency,

The longer term development of the SNA is an imperative for both the defeat of Al Shabaab and AMISOM's exit strategy. The Federal Government's Guulwade (or "Victory") Plan seeks to rapidly train and equip the SNA for joint operations now. It provides a sound framework; but business as usual will not be enough to support it. A more coherent and robust architecture for the delivery of international support to the SNA is needed. A similar detailed plan for the police, including regional police, is also needed. Donors will need to find the means to support both plans.

Excellency,

I am encouraged that the mechanisms created in 2014 to support the implementation of the New Deal Somali Compact are starting to perform. The government has exercised leadership in bringing all partners together. The United Nations is committed to increasing and accelerating delivery. A portfolio of 9 programmes, aligned with Federal Government priorities and donor resources, and with a value of over \$100m, has been approved for inclusion in the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund. I thank all donors who have pledged support, and further encourage them to support Somalia's recovery through these mechanisms.

Excellency,

There is work to do on human rights as well. This year, Somalia will need to report on progress made on their commitments in the Universal Periodic Review. I note with concern that there has been a marked increase in executions and death sentences handed out in 2015 despite Somalia's commitment to put a moratorium on executions.

I also remain concerned about threats and intimidation of media workers and journalists in Somalia, including closure of radio stations and seizure of equipment. However, I welcome the government's decision to allow Radio Shabelle to reopen on Press Freedom Day on 3 May. This was symbolic and I hope it indicates the government's will to allow appropriate space for journalists to do their work, in a democratic society, without fear of persecution.

I welcome the conclusion of the AU mission and report on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by AMISOM soldiers and commend the work of the investigation team. In line with the implementation of the Secretary-General's Human Rights Due Diligence Policy, the UN in Somalia has extended its support to AMISOM to help address the issues raised.

Excellency,

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains alarming. 730,000 Somalis continue to be unable to meet their most basic daily food needs. An additional 2.3 million people are at risk of sliding into the same situation. Among them over 1.1 million Somalis remain displaced, the majority women and children. This situation requires constant attention, adequate funding as well as continuous upgrades to our analytical and forecasting capabilities and systems. One third into the year, the Humanitarian Appeal is only 12 per cent funded, having received only US\$100 million of the \$863 million needed.

The situation could be further compounded if the rainy season is poor, Somali remittance operators are forced to close, and the conflict in Yemen continues to force people to flee to Somalia.

Excellency,

Despite the manifold challenges and concerns, I continue to believe that Somalia has the potential to become a true success story – for the people of Somalia, for the region, and also for us all. The planned High Level Partnership Forum in Mogadishu on 29 July will be a critical opportunity for Somalia and its partners to come together to define what success should look like in 2016. Continued progress between now and then will take sustained attention and commitment on all sides.

In the meantime, I am grateful for the Council's continued support and for the dedication of all our colleagues and partners in Somalia.

Thank you.

Nicholas Kay
Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and
Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)