

**Statement of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia,
Mr. Raisedon Zenenga, to the UN Security Council**

22 May 2019

Mr. President,

UNSOM began the new year facing a security crisis as a result of the mortar attack on the UN compound on 1 January, and a political crisis as a result of the expulsion of SRSG Nicholas Haysom on the same day.

The two incidents severely disrupted mandate implementation of the Mission's engagement with the Federal Government of Somalia and mandate implementation. They also elevated the security risk level for UN personnel and left our staff deeply demoralized.

We immediately prioritized the safety and security of our staff while concentrating our political efforts on mending relations with the Federal Government and putting mandate implementation back on track.

Working together with UNSOS and the UN Country Team, we have taken measures to provide more secure accommodation, working space for our staff and to strengthen our resilience to mortar attacks. I thank UNSOS for the support it has provided.

But, a lasting solution to the continuing security threat will come from denying al Shabaab the space and opportunities to prepare and launch attacks. The UN system and international partners are working together to enable Somali security forces to dominate areas used to launch mortars and to support the implementation of a comprehensive Mogadishu security plan.

We are making good progress on resetting UNSOM's relations with the Federal Government. Building on Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo's visit to Mogadishu in January, my discussions with Prime Minister Hassan Khaire have been constructive. We have agreed on arrangements to restore and strengthen the Mission's engagement with the Government, and the Prime Minister has assured me of his commitment to strengthen the relationship ahead of the arrival of the new SRSG.

There will be challenges on the road ahead, and there are still issues that will test the relationship with the Federal Government. But we are certainly in a better place than we were at the beginning of the year.

Mandate implementation is back on track, particularly in the areas where we deliver technical support. These include preparations for the 2020 elections, the constitutional review process, capacity building for the police, and contributing to the planning for ongoing security operations, including stabilization activities. Working together with other international partners, we are also using our good offices to encourage dialogue between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States.

Mr. President,

Despite the challenging security environment, the recurrent political crises, as well as capacity constraints and the challenges of managing political obstacles to its reform agenda, Somalia has remained on a positive trajectory. During the reporting period the country has made significant progress on its economic and security sector reforms. There has been progress on the inclusive politics agenda as well, including the constitutional review process and preparations for the universal suffrage elections.

At the Spring Meetings of the IMF and World Bank in April, participants commended Somalia for the achievements on its economic reforms. Satisfactory completion of the third Staff Monitored Programme has enabled the design of a fourth SMP that will pave the way for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative decision point, anticipated in early 2020.

The Federal Government has decided to apply the same rigorous approach to bring accountability and transparency to the security sector. For instance, biometric registration of all Somali National Army soldiers was completed in March. All 16,000 soldiers registered are now receiving their salaries directly into their bank accounts. This has cut out middle men, reduced corruption, and ensures regular payment of salaries to military personnel. It also paves the way for rightsizing the National Army.

In parallel with these security sector reforms, the Federal Government has launched military operations in Lower Shabelle region to advance the Transition Plan, degrade al Shabaab strongholds that are contiguous to Mogadishu and thereby arrest the recent increase in al Shabaab attacks in Mogadishu.

In an unprecedented development, current military operations, supported by AMISOM, UNSOS and international partners, have catalyzed joint planning and systematic generation of capable, accountable, acceptable and affordable Somali National Army units. They have also demonstrated the value of a comprehensive approach to security by incorporating stabilization and policing elements in the military operations, and reinvigorated implementation of the Transition Plan.

Technical preparations for universal suffrage elections in 2020 are making progress. The process of identifying potential voter registration sites began this month. The National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) has opened offices in most of the Federal Member States.

The draft Political Parties bill and the Electoral bill have been approved by the Federal cabinet and submitted to Parliament, however the Electoral bill remains a contentious issue with Federal Member States. The adoption of these bills is absolutely essential for the political roadmap to remain on track, and we urge all stakeholders to work towards reaching agreement that can be translated into parliamentary approval in the coming months.

A technical revision of nine of the fifteen chapters of the Provisional Federal Constitution have been undertaken. This is a significant achievement. But, ultimately progress will be measured

against political agreements between Federal Government and Federal Member States on key areas of the constitution, including power and resource sharing.

Important progress has been made on Human Rights. Following the violence which resulted in civilian casualties during the elections in South West State last December. Both the Federal Government and South West State authorities have completed investigations into the killing of civilians. South West State has also conducted reconciliation meetings with the communities involved and agreed to pay reparations to the families of victims.

On 18 May, the Federal Parliament ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The ratification will now go to the President for his signature. I congratulate the Federal Government on this important step to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

Mr. President,

Somalia continues to grapple with significant challenges. The Federal Government's reform efforts have encountered inevitable resistance. The economic reforms and security sector reforms in particular, entail dismantling a war economy that had flourished for decades. There are many vested interests which pose obstacles to increased accountability. Taking on these vested interests requires not only the determination, which the Federal Government has shown, but an inclusive approach of building relationships with all stakeholders to demonstrate that the reforms will yield benefits for the whole nation.

Full and sustainable implementation of Somalia's priorities hinges on restoration of cooperation between the Federal Government and Federal Member States leadership.

Though it was an important step towards the resumption of dialogue, the consultative meeting held between the leaders of the Federal Government and Federal Member States in Garowe from the 5th to the 10th May failed to reach an agreement on any of the substantive issues and on the date, format and venue of the next meeting. Together with other international partners, we continue to encourage the Federal Member States and Federal Government leaders to urgently resume dialogue and cooperation, which are indispensable for the sustainable implementation of reforms.

The disputed electoral processes in Galmudug and Jubaland, scheduled respectively for July and August, were discussed during the consultative meeting. They have become a source of concern. As was the case in South West State last year, the risk of violence is very high. We continue to urge the Federal and regional authorities to draw lessons from South West State as well as good practices from the Puntland elections, and manage the disputes over the upcoming electoral processes in a manner that avoids conflict and ensures transparency and fairness.

Mr. President,

The dialogue between Somalia and Somaliland, which also has implications for the completion of the constitutional review process, remains stalled. We are, however, encouraged by "Somaliland" President Muse Bihi's remarks on 18 May expressing his readiness to promote peace with

Puntland, including through the exchange of prisoners, and to cooperate with Somalia on issues related to security, trade and education.

Mr. President,

The positive dynamics in the Horn of Africa region hold great opportunities for Somalia to realize its strategic and economic potential. However, the ongoing deterioration of relations between Somalia and Kenya, emanating from the maritime boundary dispute, is worrying. It has implications for Somalia's statebuilding and peacebuilding efforts. Dialogue, not only between Kenya and Somalia, but also with other IGAD Member States, is essential to lower tensions and address the fundamental issues that have created the continuing tensions.

Mr. President,

Somalia has immense opportunities to make further progress in the coming months. For this to happen its leaders at the federal and sub-federal levels must agree to work together in a spirit of consensus. Parliament must focus on passing priority legislation in a timely manner. All national stakeholders need to collaborate effectively in responding to the imminent drought and avert a famine. And key relationships, including with national stakeholders, international partners and regional powers, both in the Horn of Africa and in the Gulf should be nurtured. The trajectory is upward and positive, and we can all work together to energize Somalia's population and their international partners towards reform and progress.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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