

**STATEMENT BY THE
SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR SOMALIA
AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
7 August 2019**

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you today on the situation in Somalia.

At the outset I would like to thank the Federal Government of Somalia, Federal Member States and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union for the warm welcome extended to me since I took up my duties in June.

Somalia's continued progress depends on the strong commitment of individuals to rebuild state institutions and inspire communities to come together. The Mayor of Mogadishu, known to us all as Engineer Yarisow, embodied this commitment. His passing is both tragic and premature. We would do well to keep him in our thoughts as we redouble our efforts to support Somalia's peacebuilding and statebuilding priorities.

Mr. President,

AMISOM's presence continues to enable progress in Somalia. I pay tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of AMISOM's personnel and commend their professionalism and dedication.

Security Council Resolution 2472, of 31 May 2019, authorizes the continued deployment of AMISOM, to maintain its robust support for Somalia throughout a process that will see the gradual transfer of all security responsibilities to the Somali security forces, as set out in the Security Transition Plan.

The Security Council resolution authorizes AMISOM to assist the Somali security forces with the provision of security for political process, including stabilization efforts, reconciliation, and peacebuilding. In particular, AMISOM will have a key role in supporting Somalia in planning for and delivering security for the 2020/21 electoral process, to ensure that the highest possible number of Somali citizens are afforded the opportunity to participate in the elections.

I welcome the ongoing support by AMISOM to the Federal Government's priority operations, especially in Lower Shabelle. While the process has taken time, I am confident that ongoing efforts to learn lessons and apply best practice from these operations will help ensure that this model can be replicated with continued success.

AMISOM's efforts are critical and thus it must be assured of predictable funding by the international community, timely force generation and the provision of essential force enablers and multipliers; all of which will ultimately contribute to ensuring the conditions for the successful transition of security to Somali Security Forces.

Mr. President,

I commend the Federal Government of Somalia for its determination to pursue an agenda embracing economic, political and security reforms, all with a view to creating a positive and irreversible transformation of Somalia.

Several recent developments are noteworthy in this regard. To date, 15 chapters of the Constitution have been reviewed, and the Electoral Bill has moved to the House of the People for consideration, after the House of the People and the Upper House resumed cooperation on 12 July. The National Independent Electoral Commission is preparing for the start of voter registration, and 52 political parties have registered for the national elections.

In the federal member states, the Prime Minister's determined effort in Galmudug is laying the foundations for reconciliation between divided communities. Planning continues for an inclusive, reconciliation forum later this month, which should pave the way to an electoral process to establish a unified administration in Galmudug.

Steady progress continues to put the country on a stable financial footing. The Federal Government has reached agreement on its fourth Staff Monitoring Programme. Satisfactory performance under this programme will be required for debt relief to be considered, as well as an approved interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, and the passage of key pieces of legislation.

The Somali National Army has retaken and is holding ground from al-Shabaab in Lower Shabelle, with the support of AMISOM. These gains have been consolidated by stabilization coordination, between the Government and international partners, which will be critical to ensuring the return of basic services, governance and livelihoods to the people of Lower Shabelle.

Mr. President,

The window to make further critical progress, especially on constitutional issues and preparations for the 2020/21 elections, is narrowing, amidst persistent challenges.

Security remains fragile, despite some gains. Al-Shabaab continues to launch deadly attacks, on Somalis from all walks of life, on AMISOM and on international partners. The brutal attack on the Banadir Regional Administration which claimed the life of the Mayor of Mogadishu is testament to al-Shabaab's ruthless determination to undermine progress.

In Jubaland, we are watching closely as the authorities consider and advance the electoral process, in highly contested circumstances. It is critical that a single, agreed process is concluded without violence, and in an inclusive and transparent manner.

Preparations for federal elections are underway, although details critical to planning have yet to be determined. The Electoral Bill has yet to be concluded by Parliament, while voter registration, registration of political parties, and preparations for electoral security have yet to gain momentum.

On the issue of debt relief, the tremendous progress on technical benchmarks now must be matched with political compromises with the federal parliament to pass necessary legislation and to enlist federal members states to provide further support on public financial management goals.

The single most effective way to tackle all of these challenges and others is with unity, between all Somali stakeholders, at the federal and state level. I call upon the Federal Government of Somalia, the Federal Member States, the Federal Parliament, and all other stakeholders, to engage in a spirit of dialogue, consensus and cooperation, while making every effort to accelerate political discussions and agreement on key issues as an immediate priority. As a first step, dialogue between the Federal Government and federal member states must resume, to determine the remaining political agreements which will underpin Somalia's statebuilding progress.

Mr. President,

The deterioration in the humanitarian situation comes during a time of resource constraints, forcing aid agencies to curtail relief efforts.

The 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan was only 40 per cent funded as of late July. Let me appeal to international donors to increase efforts in support of delivering life-saving assistance and protection.

One imperative is to address the root causes of Somalia's fragility, and to implement longer-term solutions to build resilience to climatic shocks. Continued support is needed to help Somalia break the cycle of recurrent crises that cause so much suffering and risk undermine the peacebuilding and state-building processes.

Mr. President,

Rapprochement in the Horn of Africa has opened up the potential for innovation, collaboration and partnership between some of the fastest growing economies in Africa. The opportunities for transformation are considerable, with the potential to benefit the people of the entire region.

The United Nations has established a five-year strategy that provides a comprehensive framework to guide UN support for the Horn of Africa. This strategy aims at operationalizing the Secretary-General's vision of prevention by encouraging joined-up action and system-wide ownership of outcomes. I look forward to advancing strategic, political and technical cooperation with the African Union as we implement this strategy.

Mr. President,

Somalia is moving ever closer to some historic milestones, including on elections, its constitution, economic reforms and debt relief, as well as the gradual assumption of security responsibility. These milestones will be reached if Somalis work closely together, with the support of the international community. The United Nations remains committed to accompanying Somalia on this journey, in partnership with the African Union.

Thank you.