



UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION IN SOMALIA
UNSOM

SRSK Kay's speech at the "Vision 2016" National Conference
2 September 2013, Mogadishu

Your Excellency, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud,
Your Excellency, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister,
Honorable members of Parliament,
Excellencies, diplomatic corps ,
Ministers, Ministers of State and former Ministers,
Mayor of Mogadishu,
Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to be invited to speak at the opening of this very important conference. As a recently arrived guest in your country, this is an opportunity to thank you for the hospitality you have extended to me and to the whole United Nations. I believe one of the duties of a good guest is to listen and learn. I have tried to do that in my first three months and look forward to doing that today as well. The entire international community has given the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) a very clear and strong mandate, which is particularly relevant to today's conference. Two tasks in particular in UNSCR 2102 are:

First to use the UN's "good offices" functions to support the Federal Government's peace and reconciliation process;

Second is to support the Federal Government by providing strategic policy advice including on the development of a federal system, the constitutional review process, and subsequent referendum on the constitution, and preparations for elections in 2016.

I very much appreciate the initiative of the Federal Government of Somalia in organizing this impressive gathering, and also at very short notice.

A political process in Somalia that is broad and inclusive, that aims to review and complete the constitutional process, and prepare for credible, free and fair elections in 2016 has the full support of the United Nations. I see this Conference as an important initiative to take us down a critical but essential path. A path towards genuine democracy.

The United Nations supports the objectives of this conference, including developing a vision, and hopefully concrete ideas, to move Somalia towards that democratic objective by 2016.

As I am still in the very early days of my mission, I would like to share with you **three principles** that are guiding my work:

First and foremost is the principle of Somali ownership and leadership. One year ago the country reached a turning point with the election of a representative and fully legitimate federal Parliament, Speaker and President. This time last year the paradigm shifted. One year later the shift is being given concrete form in the New Deal compact shortly to be presented to a conference in Brussels: containing Somali owned; Somali led peace and state building objectives.

My second principle is that you are not and should not be alone. The international community has had a mixed history in Somalia since your country fell apart in 1991. We have tried hard but with mixed results. Sometimes we have seemed to walk away. But for the last two years that has not been the case. Conferences in London, Istanbul, New York, Rome and Japan have demonstrated strong and united international commitment to Somalia. The presence and sacrifices of AMISOM show this commitment – at great cost in lives and money. Together we have tackled piracy and alleviated famine. The UN has helped politically - and I pay tribute to the great role played by my predecessor Ambassador Mahiga. The UN has also persevered with humanitarian and development work. Today 760,000 Somali children attend UNICEF sponsored schools (half of them girls). 1.4 million have been

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assisted in the first half of 2013 by WFP. 4 million have been vaccinated against polio – although possibly 600,000 children remain unvaccinated, many in Al Shabaab controlled areas. So my message to you is that UNSOM is with you and present in a way that it has not been before: in Mogadishu, Garowe, Hargeisa and shortly in Baidoa, Kismayo and Beledtweyne. UNSOM is based in Somalia. I have no house in Nairobi. You are not alone. We are here to help and we are here to stay as long as we're needed.

My third guiding principle is that we face essentially a political problem that needs a political solution. Yes, you face many challenges in the development, economic, security, governance and human rights sectors **but the over-riding challenge is political.** The heart of the political challenge appears to me to be quite simple to describe, even if rather difficult to solve. After 22 years of conflict, power and control of resources and revenue have fragmented. The strong centralist state has ceased to exist. Different regions and different people now hold different bits of power. That's why you have decided a federal model is the only system that will work in this new reality. The task now is to agree among yourselves exactly how Federalism will work in practice. How will you share power, revenue, resources and responsibilities in a way that benefits all Somalia. These are difficult issues. But ones which need political solutions.

Finally, this is also why I am optimistic. In my brief acquaintance with Somalia I am struck by how Somalis have all the skills to solve complex political problems:

- **a love of talking and debate;** a love of words shown in poetry and politics;
- **a strong sense of justice and fairness** that puts emphasis on reconciliation and mutual respect;
- **Great abilities and dedication** with hugely inspiring examples in government and civil society of bravery and commitment, including from many young diaspora and especially women returning to "do their bit".
- **And last but not least, I am encouraged by the growing sense of urgency.** To review the constitution, hold a referendum and then elections by 2016 is a mighty hill to climb. A year of quite slow progress has passed, but now I detect a real increase in the pace – Parliament worked unselfishly throughout Ramadan. Some of the key laws are drafted and commissions established, but more need to be. The Juba issue has at last been addressed. I congratulate warmly the parties on the political agreement reached in Addis last week. The New deal compact is nearly ready and consultations have happened in Baidoa, Garowe, and here. But more need to happen.

And now today, this conference has started. I hope it will be the first of many. You have a huge agenda to cover. After several days you may decide that each of the five themes requires itself a separate conference. If so, the UN will be happy to support you and perhaps you will choose to hold follow up thematic conferences in each of the major cities of Somalia. The discussions must not end here. Women's voices must especially be heard.

Today is a landmark in the political process, but just one milestone in the long road to 2016. I look forward to being your travelling companion.

As the Federal Government, through this process, moves Somalia towards a genuine transition to democracy, the United Nations stands ready to support it in all aspects. In particular we will see how we can support the priority areas as the discussions broadens and national consensus is built around them. We will in any case, spare no effort in supporting the Government and the Federal Institutions in realizing the broad objectives of this conference.

I thank you for your kind attention. I would like to congratulate the President for organizing this conference. I wish you all the best for this important event and know you will engage in a spirit of compromise, mutual respect and inclusivity.

I thank you