



**UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION IN SOMALIA
UNSOM**

**Speech by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Peter de Clercq at the Opening Ceremony of the “Go 2 School” Programme
Villa Somalia, Mogadishu
Sunday, 8 September 2013**

Your Excellency, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud,

Your Excellency, Minister of Human Development and Public Services, Dr. Maryan Qasim,

Government officials, colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

I want to congratulate Minister of Human Development and Public Services and indeed the Somali people on this momentous occasion to launch this ambitious nationwide campaign to educate one million children in Somalia. Today, September 8, is the International Literacy Day – a day to celebrate Somalia’s huge step forward in joining the world in educating our youth who are the future of Somalia and the world.

It is a sign of great hope that cannot be squashed by bullets or suicide bombers that this programme is launched today. It is a sign of profound progress that young people are offered an opportunity to fulfill their dreams and aspirations rather than seeing an existence as militia members as a way to sustain themselves and their families.

Children now can dream again of becoming doctors, engineers, or teachers, which is what Somalia so badly needs today. They will not have to flee their homes, or even the country, to realize these aspirations and dreams but will be able to realize them right here in Mogadishu, in Kismayo, Belletweyne or Garowe. In cities and villages all over Somalia, girls and boys will flock to school again.

It is a great obligation on the part of all of us to create a secure environment in which these types of programmes can thrive. We never know which child will grow up to do what amazing things for Somalia and the world – and therefore, we cannot leave any child behind. The potential of every boy and girl – in Mogadishu to IDP areas – may grow up as a leader of the Somali society. The three years of this ambitious programme is not a long time but nonetheless a crucial period and I believe if we work together, we can definitely achieve this goal.

This programme is yet another sign that we are on the right course and that we are, once again, focusing on the right priorities. We fully stand by the Government to help realize the dream of hundreds of thousands and call on all Somalis and the International Community to enable and support this programme.

Thank you.