



HIGHLIGHTS

- Humanitarian partners release response plan for Somalia's needs in 2022
- Somalia's international partners urge restraint and dialogue and renewed focus on elections
- World body's officials highlight support and challenges, and reaffirm commitment on UN Day
- International partners welcome conclusion of Somalia's upper house elections
- FEATURE: Hassan Mowlid Yasin raises awareness on the need to protect Somalia's environment
- UN Special Representative briefs Security Council on situation in Somalia
- UN calls for increased recognition of persons with disabilities
- UN Special Representative highlights importance of robust and accountable institutions
- International partners welcome local elections in Puntland

HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS RELEASE RESPONSE PLAN FOR SOMALIA'S NEEDS IN 2022

In December, the United Nations and humanitarian partners released the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Somalia – a country now facing its third consecutive failed rainy season for the first time in over 30 years.

An estimated 7.7 million Somalis will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2022, a 30 per cent rise in just one year. The 2022 HRP seeks close to \$1.5 billion to assist 5.5 million of the most vulnerable among them.

To meet the immediate needs of drought-affected communities, the UN was releasing \$17 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), bringing CERF funding for Somalia in 2021 to \$52 million. This was in addition to nearly \$60 million provided by donors to the Somalia Humanitarian Fund, a multi-donor country-based pooled funding mechanism.

"The lives of people in Somalia are on the line, and we have no time to lose," said the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief

Coordinator, Martin Griffiths. "To help avert another humanitarian catastrophe, the new CERF allocation will enable humanitarians to immediately scale up critical operations. I count on other donors to follow this lead and support the Somalia Humanitarian Fund to help people protect themselves from deepening hunger and poverty."

People in Somalia have endured decades of conflict, climate shocks and disease outbreaks, including the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact. A prolonged desert locust infestation has also affected harvests and livelihoods. At least seven in ten people in Somalia live below the poverty line.

With protection at its core, the 2022 HRP will prioritize life-saving assistance for the most vulnerable people, focusing on addressing hunger, acute malnutrition, threats to public health, disease outbreaks, abuse, violence and exposure to explosive ordnance. Humanitarian partners also aim to sustain the lives of highly vulnerable Somalis by ensuring safe, equitable and dignified access to livelihoods and essential services.

"Over the next year, we must provide the assistance that the most vulnerable people in Somalia are entitled to," said the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Adam Abdelmoula, noting the generous donor response to the 2021 HRP.

"A fast and efficient way to do this is through substantial and early funding for the 2022

HRP, and helping to replenish the depleted Somalia Humanitarian Fund, which is the most important source of funding for national NGO partners," he added.

Conflict and insecurity have forced over 541,000 people to flee their homes so far this year. Overall, more than 2.9 million people are internally displaced, most of whom need help to survive. Women and girls make up half of the displaced population, and they face a heightened risk of sexual violence and abuse.

"The current drought has devastated livelihoods and pushed families to the brink of disaster," said Somalia's Federal Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Khadija Diriye. "There is a high risk that without immediate humanitarian assistance, children, women and men will start dying of starvation in Somalia."

Somalia – on the front line of climate change – is the country most severely affected by drought in Africa's Horn.

An estimated 3.2 million people are experiencing the cumulative impacts of three consecutive below-average rainy seasons, including 169,000 people who have abandoned their homes to seek water and food as well as pasture for their livestock.

Recent projections indicate that drought could displace up to 1.4 million Somalis in the coming six months. Without a scale-up in assistance, some 3.8 million people, including those affected by drought, are projected to face crisis or worse levels of food insecurity, rising to 4.6 million people by May. Widespread livestock deaths are already being reported, and food, water and fuel prices are rapidly increasing. Crop production in January is projected to be 50-70 per cent below the last 10-year average.

SOMALIA'S INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS URGE RESTRAINT AND DIALOGUE AND RENEWED FOCUS ON ELECTIONS

Somalia's international partners issued a joint statement in late December in which they said they were following with deep concern the country's current situation and political developments.

"We call on Somalia's leaders to put the country's interests first, to de-escalate rising political tensions, and to refrain from provocation or use of force that could undermine peace and stability," the partners stated.

They noted that that they had repeatedly expressed growing concern over procedural irregularities and delays in the Somali electoral process, and that it was imperative that the 17 September 2020 and 27 May 2021 agreements, which formed

the basis for the elections, be implemented immediately without further distraction or disruption.

"A meeting of the National Consultative Council as soon as possible, along with other consultations among key stakeholders, is urgently needed," the partners added, "to accelerate and improve the process and bring the elections to a rapid and credible conclusion that will enjoy the confidence of the Somali people."

*African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, European Union (EU), Finland, France, Germany, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Sudan, Sweden, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States and United Nations.



MARKING UN DAY, WORLD BODY'S OFFICIALS IN SOMALIA HIGHLIGHT SUPPORT AND CHALLENGES, AND RE-AFFIRM COMMITMENT

Marking this year's United Nations Day, the world body's top officials in Somalia flagged some of the support being provided and challenges faced in assisting Somalis on their path to peace and stability, while also re-affirming their commitment in line with the organization's founding principles.

"The United Nations was created as a vehicle of hope for a world emerging from conflict. And now, 76 years later, it continues to serve the peoples of the world. Some of the challenges it was created to address have not changed,

unfortunately: conflict, poverty, hunger. At the same time, new challenges have arisen: COVID-19 and climate change, to name just two examples," the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, James Swan, said at a virtual press conference in Mogadishu two days after UN Day, which was on 24 October.

"Here in Somalia," he continued, "the United Nations has been a steadfast partner of the country since its independence, dating back decades, and we expect the partnership with Somalia to continue across a wide range of areas in the future."

The senior-most UN official in Somalia was addressing the media two days after UN Day, which is observed annually on 24 October.

In 1945, representatives of 50 countries [met in San Francisco](#) at the UN Conference

on International Organization to draw up the UN Charter, which is the founding document of the United Nations.

The UN Charter was signed on 26 June 1945 and came into force on 24 October that year, when it had been ratified by a majority of signatories – and officially bringing the UN into existence. Since its founding, the UN's mission and work have been guided by the purposes and principles contained in the Charter.

Mr. Swan was joined by the UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Somalia, Anita Kiki Gbeho; the Head of UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSO), Lisa Filipetto; the Country Representative of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and acting Humanitarian Coordinator, Mohamed Ayoya; and the Resident Representative of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and acting Resident Coordinator, Jocelyn Mason.

In his opening remarks, the UN Special Representative said the world body's

involvement with the Horn of Africa country includes support for security, state-building, humanitarian needs and development, assistance with local governance, service delivery, human rights, the inclusion of women and youth, and ensuring the representation of minorities and other marginalized groups in political processes and decision-making.

Focus on elections

Turning to Somalia's political and electoral situation, the UN Special Representative welcomed the recent announcement of an agreement which resolved differences between President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmaajo' and Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble.

"We hope that will shift focus back to where it is most needed right now: the country's electoral process," he said, adding that the United Nations also welcomed the near-completion of Somalia's Upper House

We also welcome the efforts to achieve the minimum 30 per cent quota for women's representation in Parliament

elections and urged its leaders to turn quickly to the next phase – the election of the representatives in the Lower House, known as the House of the People.

"We also welcome the efforts to achieve the minimum 30 per cent quota for women's representation in Parliament, while also noting that approximately 26 per cent of the Upper House seats have been filled by women so far," Mr. Swan said. "We call on all involved to redouble their efforts to

achieve the quota in the upcoming House of the People's elections."

Mr. Swan noted that the world body's support for Somalia's electoral process has been constant over the past years. It includes coordinating donor support and contributions, and frequent engagement with the Federal Election Implementation Team, State Election Implementation Teams, the Office of the Prime Minister, Federal Member States and the donors.

The UN Special Representative also highlighted the recent, direct local elections which took place in three districts in Puntland, and which a team of UN officials attended in a show of solidarity with the people of Puntland as they embarked on this process.

"We are hopeful that, if this process is shown to have been successful, it can offer a model for future elections on a 'one person, one vote' basis to be held at local, Federal Member State, and, in the future, national levels, here in Somalia," Mr. Swan said.

Security support

In her remarks, Ms. Filipetto noted how UNSOS – one of the key actors working with Somalia to bring security in line with the national security transition plan – was providing logistical support to 19,600 military, police and civilian staff serving with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and to 13,900 Somali security forces in joint operations with or in coordination with AMISOM.

"Our support includes food, fuel, water, defence stores, counter-IED capacity-building and also casualty evacuations," Ms. Filipetto said in relation to the Somali troops.

"UNSOS is not always visible to Somalis, but you may see the UN aviation fleet that is operated by UNSOS. Some of the activities which UNSOS has undertaken, which benefit the country's development, include

the upgrade and repair of runways, aviation runways in Baidoa, Jowhar, Belet Weyne and Dhusamareb," the UN official added.

Humanitarian support

The UN Special Representative noted how conflict remains the key driver for the displacement of Somalis, but climatic shocks have now become the second leading reason for them to leave their homes.

Somalia has had two consecutive below-average rainfall seasons, and is bracing itself for a third.

"The projection for 2022 is that 7.7 million Somalis will need humanitarian assistance during the course of the year," Mr. Swan said, adding that the UN and its partners have provided humanitarian assistance to some 2.3 million people in Somalia.

Mr. Ayoya, the acting Humanitarian Coordinator, added that Somalia has one of

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the largest numbers of internally displaced people – estimated at around 2.9 million, with some 420,000 forced to flee their homes between January and September alone, due to conflict and insecurity.

"The humanitarian needs are vast. Unfortunately, our resources are limited. Humanitarian partners have been racing against the clock to deliver aid and protection to the most vulnerable Somalis," Mr. Ayoya said.

"The crippling effects of the COVID pandemic, along with other factors, have resulted in severe humanitarian funding shortages for Somalia this year," he added. "Even now as we speak, we are now nearly at the end of the year and our HRP [Humanitarian Response Plan] is unfortunately only 50 per cent funded."

Development support

Ms. Swan also spoke about the United Nations' ongoing support for Somalia's development priorities, noting how it was delivered in "a spirit of partnership" and fully aligned with Somalia's National Development Plan and relevant structures.



In late 2020, the Federal Government of Somalia and the United Nations signed a new cooperation agreement – known as the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNCF) – which sets out how the country and the world body will work together over the next five years to achieve peace, stability and prosperity for all Somalis.

A national task force on droughts and floods has now been launched as well, and will lead nexus-centred interventions to reduce the negative impact of climatic shocks

The UNCF represents the collective commitment of the Federal Government of Somalia and the United Nations to work together in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone everywhere, and were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda, which sets out a 15-year plan to achieve the SDGs.

Referring to Somalia's development in his remarks, Mr. Mason, the acting Resident Coordinator, said there was some progress.

“The challenges we inherited in 2020, including the onset of COVID and its devastating effect on the global economy, droughts and flooding, as well as the locust infestation, are, sadly, not yet behind us. According to some projections, as much as 20 per cent of Somalia's population may be directly or indirectly affected by the pandemic,” Mr. Mason said.

“However, according to the World Bank report, the country's economy is expected to rebound from these shocks, with real domestic product projected to grow by about 2.4 per cent this year,” he continued. “Nevertheless, it has some way to go. Somalia's domestic revenue was 13 per cent lower in the first quarter of 2021.”

The acting Resident Coordinator said that, despite these challenges, the UN and its partners had continued to work on achieving sustainable development. He pointed to Somalia's accession to the UN Convention against Corruption as a “monumental milestone” in the fight against corruption, and to the launch of the National Water Strategy for Somalia as another notable achievement.

“This achievement has set the foundation for sustainable development of water resources in the country. This is particularly important as climate change is increasingly seen as a driver of conflict and requires holistic solutions to prevent disaster,” Mr. Mason said.

“A national task force on droughts and floods has now been launched as well, and will lead nexus-centred interventions to reduce the negative impact of climatic shocks,” the UN official added. “Somalia's crises are multifaceted, and they therefore require multifaceted, holistic solutions that build resilience against future shocks.”



INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS WELCOME CONCLUSION OF SOMALIA'S UPPER HOUSE ELECTIONS

In November, Somalia's international partners* issued a statement in which they welcomed the conclusion of the Upper House elections following the 11 November National Consultative Council meeting and leaders' commitment to conclude the House of the People elections by the end of December 2021.

The international partners added, however, that they remained deeply concerned about the extremely delayed election timeline and strongly urge the Somali leadership, at all levels of government, to swiftly recommence and complete the electoral process for the House of the People seats. We note that sufficient funds are already available, including from international partners, to complete a significant portion of the House of the People elections.

“We continue to call for timely, inclusive and credible elections that maintain the integrity of the electoral process. We also strongly urge Somali leaders and the State Election Implementation Teams, in line with the 17 September 2020 and 27 May 2021 agreements, to ensure that a minimum 30 per cent quota is reserved for women members of Parliament through a clear mechanism,” they said.

The partners also reiterated their deep concern that, the longer the elections are delayed, the more attention and resources will be diverted from important national priorities, such as responding to the humanitarian consequences of drought, state-building and ensuring security, which are critical to the overall stability of Somalia and the welfare of its people.

*African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, European Union (EU), Finland, Germany, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, League of Arab States (LAS), Netherlands, Norway, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, and United Nations.



HASSAN MOWLID YASIN

RAISING AWARENESS

ON THE NEED TO PROTECT

SOMALIA'S ENVIRONMENT

Decades of war and civil unrest have taken their toll on Somalia's environment, with attention firmly focused on the country's humanitarian needs for a long time.

That focus has spread somewhat over recent years, with growing recognition of the importance of its environmental well-being to its long-term development.

Tied into this is the growing awareness of the impact of climate change, particularly its connection to land degradation, which, in turn, is closely linked to desertification, drought and unsustainable livestock and agricultural practices. Food insecurity and livelihoods, possible hazardous waste, lack of marine and coastal management, and the mitigation and management of natural disasters are other environmental concerns which are being discussed more and more.

Also tied into this is growing activism on the environment by young Somalis.

"Environmental problems such as deforestation affecting 80 per cent of Somalia's lands, the dumping of waste and poisonous chemicals along Somalia's coastline, as well as illegal fishing and poaching, to name a few, are common in Somalia," says Hassan Mowlid Yasin.

Mr. Yasin is the 29-year-old co-founder and vice-executive director of a non-

governmental organization, the Somali Greenpeace Association ([SOGPA](#)), which seeks to raise awareness among the public about the importance of taking care of the country's environment.

"The association envisions a national environment free from the threat of climate change with sustainable development, equity and justice for all. Our mission is to develop and promote development options relevant to Somalia in the international climate change dialogues, interventions and related processes," Mr. Yasin says.

Formed in 2019 in Mogadishu, SOGPA has more than 40 members located around Somalia, including in the Benadir region, and the Federal Member States of Hirshabelle, South West State, Galmudug and Puntland.

SOGPA also serves as an umbrella grouping for community-level associations working on environmental issues. These are the Ma'ib Aid and Development Organization (MADO) in Baidoa, South West State; the Somali Community Development Organization (SOCDO) in Abudwak, Galmudug; Save the Environment in Garowe, in Puntland; and the Female Farah Foundation in Galdogob, in Puntland.

"Somalia has been facing the impact of climate change, such as floods, droughts, food insecurity and water shortages, for more than ten years – and what we are seeing now is the possibility of conflict brought about by competition for scarce resources because of climate change," Mr. Yasin notes.

Personal experience

Mr. Yasin's path to becoming an environmental activist was atypical – for most of his life, he had not considered pursuing studies nor a career in environmental work.

He was born in Mogadishu in 1992, and undertook his primary and secondary education at Yameis International School in the city of Galkayo. He returned to the country's capital in 2013 when he began studying for a degree in public health at Jobkey University. Following graduation, he taught biology at local schools.

For Mr. Yasin, it was his own personal experiences that led him to environmental work.

"In 2005, when I lived in the Hamarweyne and Hamar Jajab districts of Mogadishu, flash floods occurred. I could not access the market because the whole area was covered with water, but I accepted this as part of just how things were," he recalls.

"However, I became more aware in 2016 as there were flash floods in Hamarweyne which damaged the properties of the private school that I was teaching at – it destroyed books and teaching equipment, and the classrooms were full of water," Mr. Yasin says. "Then, when I shifted in 2019 to the Danwadaagta area of Wadajir, flash floods in [the surrounding area] El-Qalow prevented me from going to work for more than two days because the road was impassable."

These direct experiences awakened his interest and led him to undertake research on the issue through online courses and wide-ranging reading.



“There wasn’t very much local information on climate change and environmental issues in Somalia, so I had to look elsewhere and this included training such as the provided by ‘One UN Climate Change Learning Partnership (UN CC:Learn).’ I delved into this and, as a result, I have been accredited as a global climate change instructor by UN CC:Learn,” he says.

UN CC:Learn is a collaborative initiative of 36 multilateral organizations working together to help countries build the knowledge and skills they need to take action on climate change, including better climate literacy and other crucial skills to tackle this challenge. The initiative provides guidance and quality learning resources to support people, governments and businesses to understand, adapt, and build resilience to climate change.

Armed with the knowledge gained from the UN CC:Learn courses and elsewhere, Mr. Yasin now works full-time at SOGPA, overseeing its outreach and awareness-raising activities, and going out in person to speak on the environment.

“I was a part-time biology teacher at the Imran Bin Hussein Primary and Secondary School in Mogadishu, and in addition to my teaching, I was allowed some time to also impart information on environmental and climate change issues in Somalia,” he notes, adding that when visiting schools to talk about the environment, he sometimes goes from theoretical to practical activities such as the leading tree-planting activities.

In 2020, to celebrate its 100,000th certificate of course completion, UN CC:Learn asked its alumni to share their own stories for climate action, having been inspired by one of our courses. It received hundreds of stories from 87 countries and selected the best ten to inspire others, and awarded each of them an award certifying them as a 2020 UN CC:Learn Champion – Mr. Yasin was one of the awardees.

So far, more than 1,000 Somali youth have received targeted education and training on the environment through SOGPA.

Others

Mr. Yasin and his fellow SOGPA members are not alone in their quest to educate Somali youth on the environmental needs of their country. He notes that the Federal Government of Somalia has taken several initiatives with policies on environmental protection and climate change.

These include the adoption in 2013 of a [National Adaption Programme of Action on Climate Change](#), a [National Environmental Policy/Management Bill in 2019](#) and a [National Climate Change Policy in 2020](#), to address the risks associated with climate change in Somalia.

“The government has developed an environmental act and the climate change policy which, if properly implemented, can help address climate change and environmental issues in Somalia,” Mr. Yasin says.

Moreover, the Directorate of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is very active in spearheading in the protection, conservation and restoration of the environment in Somalia. It leads all aspects of climate change and environmental programming and has the mandate to coordinate across line ministries, implement the National Determined Contributions and deliver on the National Adaptation plan.

Currently, along with tens of thousands of government representatives, businesses and civil society representatives from all over the world, DECC officials are in Glasgow, Scotland, on behalf of Somalia, to attend the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) at which discussions are underway to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The young activist also calls on the international

community to assist, particularly through support for local organizations trying to make a difference on the ground in the Horn of Africa country.

“These organizations need support in areas such as organizational capacity development, help with operational cost, and funding for climate change and environmental education programmes, as well as environmental schemes that help create job opportunities for the Somali youth,” Mr. Yasin says.

According to studies by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), over the last 60 years, at least 40 per cent of all internal conflicts around the world have been linked to the exploitation of natural resources, whether high-value resources such as timber and minerals, or scarce resources such as fertile land and water.

In recognition of this, in 2001, the UN General Assembly declared 6 November of each year as the [International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict](#).

The United Nations attaches great importance to ensuring that action on the environment is part of peacebuilding strategies on the basis that there can be no durable peace if the natural resources that sustain livelihoods and ecosystems are destroyed. The UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) has climate risk management as a core part of its mandate.

“Supporting the government and strengthening the system is essential and partnering with supporting youth and community-led adaptation is the key to helping halt the impacts of climate change in Somalia,” says the UN Climate Security and Environment Advisor to Somalia, Christophe Hodder, who is also the first-ever such advisor appointed in a UN peace operation.

“Building the community resilience to climate shocks, while supporting the government’s own delivery mechanisms and integrating environmental approaches into security approaches will hopefully lead to a more sustainable peacebuilding,” he adds.





UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON SOMALIA

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, James Swan, briefed the Security Council at its meeting on Somalia on 17 December. Below is the transcript of his remarks:

Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to brief the Council on the situation in Somalia. I am pleased to do so again together with the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Francisco Madeira. I am also grateful to brief you alongside Ms. Asha Siyad, co-founder of the Somali Women's Leadership Initiative, and a member of the Goodwill Ambassadors who have tirelessly advocated in support of the 30 per cent representation of women in the elections.

Progress has been made in the electoral process, albeit slow and uneven progress. I welcome the recent completion of the elections for all the 54 seats in the Upper House of the Federal Parliament. It is encouraging that 14 women will soon take office as Senators, representing 26 per cent of the Upper House. This is an increase from previous elections in 2016, though still short

of the 30 per cent target. It is also encouraging that elections for the House of the People have commenced, with 2 of the 275 seats having been completed, and elections for an additional eleven seats announced to begin this week.

In addition to the electoral preparations at the national level, the holding of peaceful direct local elections in three districts in Puntland in October demonstrated the feasibility of holding one-person-one-vote elections - and underscored the desire among Somali people for political participation on the basis of universal suffrage.

While acknowledging this progress, it has now been more than one year since Somalia's political leaders signed the 17 September Electoral Agreement, and nearly six months since their commitments were reaffirmed through the 27 May Agreement.

The elections for the vast majority of seats in the Federal Parliament are still to commence, electoral security preparations need to be accelerated, and a list published of the 30 per cent of the House of the People seats that will be reserved for women. We continue to stress that women's full inclusion and representation in political life, and in all sectors of life, is key for Somalia's sustainable peace and development. This message was underscored by the UN Deputy Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa on their recent visits to Somalia.

The United Nations continues to engage with and support the key stakeholders to advance the election process.

This includes diplomatic engagement, including joint visits with partners to the Federal Member State capitals and polling sites and joint partner statements, as well as technical support to the Federal Electoral Implementation Team, State Electoral Implementation Teams and the Office of the Prime Minister, as well as coordination and channelling of donor contributions for the elections.

I urge all stakeholders to move swiftly to conclude the House of the People elections in the Federal Member States, to ensure that the full Parliament is elected before the end of this year. I also call for the full respect of fundamental rights during the campaign and electoral periods, including peaceful assembly, and the freedom of movement, association, and expression.

I am also pleased to note, Mr. President, in regard to political developments in Somalia, that tensions between the President and the Prime Minister that emerged in August and September over two issues, namely the appointment of senior security officials, and the handling of an investigation into the disappearance of an agent of the National Intelligence and Security Agency, that these tensions have now eased. Following mediation efforts by several senior Somali officials and individuals, a broadly welcomed compromise solution was announced at the end of October.

Mr President,

The security situation in Somalia, unfortunately, continues to be volatile. I

pay tribute to the commitment and sacrifice of Somali Security Forces and AMISOM forces that continue to face Al Shabaab on a daily basis.

Al Shabaab remains a serious threat to Somalia's security, able to maintain a high level of activities, including through continued use of improvised explosive devices, and an increase in the use of suicide bombers. In Mogadishu, the latest Vehicle-Borne improvised explosive device attack occurred on 25 September, targeting a checkpoint at Villa Somalia, resulting in several fatalities, including of a senior government advisor. I condemn in the strongest terms Al Shabaab's attacks, and express deep condolences to their victims.

So far in 2021, UNSOM has documented 964 civilians killed or injured as a result of armed conflict. Al-Shabaab remains the largest perpetrator, responsible for almost two thirds of civilian casualties.

Regrettably, political tensions also continue to drive conflict in Somalia. The period from 23 to 26 October saw intense fighting in the town of Guriel between Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama and Galmudug security forces supported by federal armed forces. This armed confrontation resulted in significant casualties, mass displacement of the civilian population, and severe damage to public facilities and private homes. Along with partners, the United Nations engaged all parties on these issues, with strong calls for a cessation of hostilities and pursuit of dialogue to address political differences.

Implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan for progressive transfer of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali Security Forces is advancing, but remains behind schedule. Regarding the implementation of resolution 2568 of March 2021 with respect to post-2021 security arrangements, the Secretary-General will keep the Council informed of developments, and I therefore will not go into details of this matter. Suffice to say, further discussions will be required among key security stakeholders to reach agreement on the strategic objectives, size and composition of a future African Union

mission designed to support the security transition in Somalia in the most effective way. In this regard, I welcome the recent African Union Peace and Security Council visit to Somalia, which provided an important opportunity for the discussions among many stakeholders.

Mr President,

The ongoing delays in the electoral process continue to stall progress in other critical areas and hamper the achievement of national priorities beyond the elections, including reforming the constitution and justice sector, and advancing the development agenda and financial reforms, including achieving the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative Completion Point in 2022.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains dire, compounded by conflict, displacement and disease outbreaks. Somalia is also on the frontline of recurrent climatic shocks, exacerbating the humanitarian emergency. Humanitarian partners estimate that 7.7 million Somalis will require humanitarian assistance in 2022. Some 1.2 million children under the age of five are likely to be acutely malnourished in 2022 without immediate treatment.

Some 2.9 million people are estimated to be internally displaced throughout the country, one of the highest numbers of IDPs in the world. In this context, I am gravely concerned that the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan is currently only 51 percent funded. I thank donors for their generous contributions to date, but a critical scale-up in humanitarian action is urgently required.

Mr President,

Let me conclude by stressing that, although progress is being made, the efforts of Somalia's political leaders will need to be redoubled in the coming weeks to bring the elections for the Federal Parliament to a successful conclusion, so that presidential elections can then be held as soon as possible.

The completion of these elections is more important than ever, so that all efforts can return to the key governance, security, and development priorities in Somalia.

Thank you.

ON INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY, IMPORTANCE OF ROBUST AND ACCOUNTABLE INSTITUTIONS HIGHLIGHTED

On the occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day, observed annually on 9 December, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, James Swan, underlined the importance of building accountable and transparent institutions and welcomed the country's progress in this area.

"Corruption is a major obstacle to development. It undermines efforts toward state-building, peace and reconciliation. It also undermines public trust and weakens state institutions and their ability to serve the Somali people," said Mr. Swan.

"In this respect, the United Nations is encouraged by Somalia's recent accession to the UN Convention against Corruption," he added. "This is a significant step forward."

The UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), to which Somalia became a State Party on 11 August 2021, is a key international instrument to sustain, manage and track countries' fight against corruption. It is the world's only legally binding anti-corruption instrument.

The United Nations in Somalia welcomes the Federal Government's commitment to implement reforms to strengthen governance and reduce vulnerabilities to corruption. This commitment is evidenced by the appointment of commissioners to the Independent Anti-Corruption Commission in May 2021.

"We urge all branches of the Government to take further measures to uphold integrity and accountability in the management of public finance and resources by strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks against corruption with robust enforcement and punitive measures," Mr. Swan said.

Globally, International Anti-Corruption Day is observed on 9 December with the aim of raising awareness about corruption issues and the role of the UNCAC in preventing and combating them.





UN CALLS FOR INCREASED RECOGNITION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, observed on 3 December annually, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, James Swan, called for increased recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

“Persons with disabilities of all age groups have been identified as a particularly marginalized and at-risk group within the Somali society. The number of people with disabilities in Somalia is likely to be higher than the global estimate of 15 per cent of the population due to the long period of conflict, humanitarian emergencies and limited access to health care,” said Special Representative Swan.

The theme for this year's commemoration is “leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.” The theme is relevant in Somalia

as it underlines the need for full participation of persons with disabilities in the ongoing electoral process and in efforts to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has added additional challenges to the existing vulnerabilities of persons with disabilities. This necessitates increased and concerted efforts by Somalia to address both the immediate and long-term needs of persons with disabilities, including ensuring their participation in all spheres of society and in leadership,” added Special Representative Swan.

Somalia enacted the National Disability Agency Bill in December 2018, ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in August 2019, and launched the National Disability Agency in July 2021.

“I encourage the Federal Government of Somalia to increase support for the National Disability Agency, a key body to promote disability rights,” said the UN Special Representative to Somalia and added, “the UN in Somalia remains committed to supporting Somalia in the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and looks forward to the finalization of the National Disability Rights Bill, to be put into law in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.”



INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS WELCOME LOCAL ELECTIONS IN PUNTLAND

With the peaceful completion of polling and announcement of preliminary results from ‘one person, one vote’ electoral process in three districts of Puntland in October, Somalia's international partners* congratulated the people of Puntland for leading the way towards instituting a system of universal suffrage elections across Somalia.

In a joint statement, the international partners welcomed the enthusiasm shown by the population of the districts of Qardho, Eyl and Ufeyn, as shown by the high number of voters who turned out.

“We look forward to the completion of additional voter registration and the roll-out of state wide local government elections in Puntland in 2022. The partners commend all stakeholders for their role in the process, noting in particular the effective collaboration between the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC), the political associations and civil society organizations,” the partners noted.

“This encouraging achievement shows the feasibility of universal suffrage elections in Somalia,” they added. “The international partners underline their collective commitment to supporting elections as they roll out at local, state and national levels across the country.”

* African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Canada, Denmark, Egypt, European Union (EU), Finland, Germany, Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), Kenya, League of Arab States, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, and United Nations.