

Madam President

Thank you for the opportunity to brief the Council. I am particularly pleased to be doing so alongside the new Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia, Dr. Maman S. Sidikou.

When I briefed you in July I focused on the threat posed by Al Shabaab. Since then I am pleased to report that Al Shabaab has suffered significant reverses and the political process has moved forward. The Council's landmark visit in August was a signal to Somalis and Al Shabaab that the international community remains committed and that more progress is needed. Somalia's challenges remain significant. Urgent and coherent action by the Federal Government and international partners is needed in security, development, political and humanitarian fields. For this we need unity of purpose from Somali politicians and leaders. Neither Somalia nor the international community will have patience for anyone who deliberately stands in the way of peace, reconciliation and stability.

At the same time as insisting, rightly, on the critical need for sustained action, we cannot and should not be blind to the fact that Somalia, with the help of the entire international community, is living through a moment of unprecedented

change and optimism. We need to seize the opportunities. Somalia is a country slowly waking from a terrible nightmare. Two days ago we were reminded of just how terrible when a car bomb killed at least 13 in Mogadishu.

Madam President,

There has been important political progress, particularly in state formation. I congratulate the President and Prime Minister for taking this forward jointly. I welcome the ongoing process of reconciliation and the establishment of interim regional administrations. These must be fully inclusive. Women and youth must participate in and shape them. The capacity of these interim regional administrations also needs to be built with international support, including from the UN. I encourage the Federal Government to accelerate an inclusive state formation process in the central regions. I reiterate my hope that we will have a new map of a federal Somalia by the end of the year, and if at all possible, by the time of the Copenhagen High-Level Partnership Forum next month.

There also needs to be more and faster progress in creating two key bodies: the National Independent Electoral Commission and the Boundaries and Federation Commission. Also The Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission should quickly begin its work in Mogadishu and the Parliamentary

Oversight Committee should be established. I call upon the Federal Government and Federal Parliament to make the necessary arrangements.

I remain particularly concerned about the risk of political in-fighting. Twice in the last twelve months this has led to bureaucratic paralysis. The President and Prime Minister have navigated a way out of recent tensions, for which I heartily commend them. I appeal to all Somalia's political institutions, including the Federal Parliament to focus on the urgent business of establishing the institutions and processes that will pave the way to longer term peace, stability and reconciliation. This parliamentary session will be decisive: if key laws are not passed, Somalis will not achieve their dreams for a new constitution and democratic elections in 2016.

In "Somaliland" preparations are underway for elections in June 2015. I am glad to report that I visited "Somaliland" in August at the invitation of the Government and agreed an agenda for future UN engagement, including my own good offices role.

Madam President,

I warmly congratulate AMISOM and the Somali National Army for progress in Operation Indian Ocean. I pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the cause of peace today, including in an attack today. With the death of its leader Ahmed

Godane on 1 September, these advances have weakened Al Shabaab operationally and financially. Planning for Operation Indian Ocean has been joint and inclusive. This has significantly reduced logistical problems. UNSOA is running an unprecedented operation supporting, under Resolution 2124 (2013), a dynamic offensive with a fraction of the capacity that would normally be used to support a military operation of the same size. However key assets, especially helicopters, are still needed, not least to help ensure secure road access across the country.

Military action alone will not eradicate the terrorist threat in Somalia. Military gains need to be consolidated through stabilisation. It is also important to focus on strategic communication and a comprehensive and properly funded disengaged combatants programme. The UN is actively assisting with all of this. We also need more resolute action to end the trade in charcoal that is funding terrorism.

There has been progress in establishing local administrations and the deployment of Somali Police Force officers in some newly recovered areas. The Federal Government has led strategic and operational coordination of stabilisation activities. This needs to be intensified to ensure a coherent approach, and the establishment of local administrations needs to be synchronised with the on-going federal state-formation process.

Madam President,

I remain concerned that efforts to develop security institutions are insufficient. I welcome the recent discussions in London, particularly on militia integration and a more coordinated and realistic plan for defence sector reform. I note the improvements in the Federal Government's reporting against its obligations under the UN sanctions regime, and look forward to further improvements with the support and cooperation of international partners. We shall also continue to support efforts to strengthen the rule of law.

Madam President

Human rights in Somalia remain a concern and a priority. I welcome the recent visit by the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict and the recent commitment by the Federal Government to put ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child before Parliament. But I share the concerns of the Independent Expert on Human Rights in Somalia about the recent arrests of journalists, who are yet to face trial, and the closure of media outlets, as well as the increasing use of capital punishment. I reiterate my call on the Federal Government to implement its pledge to establish a moratorium on the death penalty. I also urge further progress in establishing the Independent Human Rights Commission.

I am very concerned about recent allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by some AMISOM troops. I welcome the African Union's commitment, reiterated by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in New York on 24 September, to a full investigation in accordance with its zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. It is important that this is transparent, and that witnesses are protected.

Madam President,

The humanitarian situation in Somalia has continued to deteriorate. Over 3 million people need humanitarian or livelihood assistance in Somalia today. This includes over 1 million Somalis who cannot feed themselves, an increase of 20 per cent in six months.

Humanitarian assistance has been stepped up. Over 300 metric tons of supplies for tens of thousands of people have been delivered by air due to the lack of secure access to recovered areas.

But this still falls short of needs on the ground. Air cargo flights simply cannot deliver the quantities required. Secure road access is essential. We must also urgently mobilise sufficient resources. Otherwise, we face another devastating

humanitarian emergency which could undermine the political and security gains of the last two years.

Madam President

I welcome the appointment of the Independent Advisory Panel to the Financial Governance Committee, and I look forward to greater transparency and better public financial management, particularly in the area of public sector contracts. Donors also need to strengthen transparency of aid flows and activities in accordance with commitments under the “New Deal” Somali Compact. The UN is doing its part to comply with its Compact commitments. We shall soon sign our first Integrated Strategic Framework with the Federal Government. This will guide more coherent and better coordinated UN efforts to achieve the national priorities set out in the Compact.

The Copenhagen High Level Partnership Forum in November will be an important moment to take stock of progress towards the goals of the Somali Compact. It is important that sub-federal administrations are given a role in the conference, including in its preparation.

In conclusion Madam President, I remain a committed optimist. I do not underestimate the challenges or the urgency and difficulty of overcoming them. But I believe firmly Somalia's problems are those of a country coming together, not a country falling apart. I know the Council spends a lot of its time dealing with the latter.

I thank you for your unstinting support for Somalia and I welcome the many commitments made at last month's high level event in New York. I pay tribute to my UN colleagues, who are working with dedication and courage to help Somalis realise their hopes and dreams. I also want to thank all of Somalia's international partners, particularly the African Union, the European Union and IGAD for their cooperation, contribution and commitment to Somalia, without which we would not be where we are today. Somalia's long night is not over, but the sky is at last getting lighter.