



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

Letter to the members of the Somali Diaspora (No. 28)

Nairobi, 30 December 2010

Dear Friends,

My warmest New Year greetings to all of you. At the very outset, I must say that the last few months have been turbulent and trying ones, regrettably leaving little time to pursue my regular correspondence with my Diaspora friends. After a period of animated suspense, I am truly pleased to be writing this letter now with the recent political crisis behind us, and focusing on the tasks ahead, challenging though they may be.

I should take this opportunity to commend the President, the Speaker and the Members of Parliament for amicably resolving the political impasse and endorsing Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed's appointment. Likewise, I am pleased that Parliament, adhering to the Transitional Federal Charter, finally approved the Prime Minister Mohamed's 18-member Cabinet. It was a pivotal moment and an opportune time for the Somali authorities to demonstrate their role as privileged representatives of the Somali people. The new Cabinet is unprecedented in its lean size and technocratic profile which augers well for a results oriented performance in coming months.

You will recall that on the 27 to 28 September 2010, the International Contact Group on Somalia held its 18th meeting in Madrid. For the first time, President Sheikh Sharif was in attendance at this quarterly meeting. The international community requested that within sixty days the Somali Government should define a Roadmap with a strategy for undertaking priority tasks prior to the end of the transition in August 2011. The focus on this process was unfortunately interrupted by the political stalemate

For more information, please contact: Susannah Price / Donna Cusumano, Public Information Officers
UN Political Office for Somalia (Nairobi, Kenya)
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following the resignation of the former Prime Minister, Mr. Omar Abdirashid Sharmarke. The stalemate also inhibited the ability of my Office and the international community to assist the TFG in defining and undertaking these key tasks in the absence of a government. Much to the delight of the international community, and following the approval of the new government, the Prime Minister produced a Roadmap exactly sixty days after the Madrid conference.

The Roadmap focuses on critical priorities which include enhanced political outreach and reconciliation, good governance, security initiatives, the Constitution making process and building institutional delivery capabilities. The Prime Minister and the Cabinet are now finalizing the Roadmap, Ministerial work plans and a budget which will be rolled out early in the year.

All stakeholders and partners are focused on consolidating their strategic efforts to help the TFG implement the transitional tasks in order to make a profound impact on the peace process and in preparing the next political dispensation after August 2011. However, with only eight months left, the TFIs must make concerted and sustained efforts to remain stable in order to accomplish these tasks. The transitional tasks will also entail building a consensus among all stakeholders on how to end the transition and on the form of a new political dispensation after August 2011.

Of utmost importance right now, is to ensure that the broadest consultations on the constitution-making process take place. I say this because it is this action which will facilitate progress on many critical issues that are key to advancing the political process. The process must be all-inclusive, it requires that the TFG engage with the whole cross-section of Somalia, not only the opposition, but with local, regional, clan-based

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administrations, the business community and the Diaspora to solicit and collate views on what form their next government should take. It should be appreciated however, that the implementation of the Roadmap is very much dependant on a permitting security situation in Mogadishu and beyond.

My Office has produced a strategy that seeks to guide the efforts of the international community, as well as support the Government in achieving the transitional tasks. It includes improving coherence and cohesion within the government, broadening the political base, facilitating the completion of the constitution making process, and it encourages cooperation between the TFG and regional authorities. Equally important, is building the institutional capacity of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) and facilitating the provision of basic services starting in Mogadishu in order to enhance the legitimacy of the government.

To this end, on the 5 November, UNPOS together with UNDP convened a Joint Strategy Planning Workshop with the objective of enhancing UN support to the constitution-making process and concluded with a unified work-plan which was ultimately endorsed by the Independent Federal Constitution Commission (IFCC). The African Union (AU) and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), as regional partners, participated in the workshop and provided valuable inputs.

I also attended an AU-sponsored a Conference, organized by AMISOM on 15 November, in Bujumbura to deliberate on critical issues in the remaining several months of the transitional period of the current government. The Conference made several recommendations among which were a call to the TFG to expedite the constitution-making process; using it as a vehicle for national dialogue and reconciliation and to the

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international community, especially the UN, to provide adequate assistances, both financial and technical resources to the TFG to accomplish the exercise on time.

The Diaspora will have a critical role in these remaining months of the transition. The dialogue on the draft constitution at home, in the region and overseas will be the occasion and the platform for the Diaspora to contribute towards reconciliation, shaping and influencing a legitimate transition to the next political arrangements as well as the future modalities for the Somali nation-state. The Diaspora is also expected to provide the backbone of the civil service for the Government and to continue supporting households back home in Somalia as another severe drought is threatening the whole Somalia in 2011.

Not losing sight of the importance and close interrelation of security, governance development and humanitarian sectors, on 24 November, I met in Cairo with Dr. Mohamad Zeyd and retired Ambassador Hamdi Salah of the Arab-African Initiative. We discussed the possibility of organizing a conference in mid 2011 as a follow-up to the Istanbul Conference focusing on the private sector's role in reconstruction and development of Somalia. We agreed on the need to confer with the Turkish Government and the Islamic Development Bank who co-chaired the Istanbul Conference back in May 2010. This is another area where the Diaspora has already demonstrated courage and patriotism in investing in some sectors where there is relative stability. I appeal to you to scale up these initiatives through the Istanbul Framework.

In Cairo, I also met with Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (LAS) Mr. Ahmed Ben Hili. The LAS has been a great supporter of the Somali peace efforts and the UN regards it, together with the AU and IGAD, as one of the key partners

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in the implementation of the Djibouti Peace Agreement. The three organizations were among the multilateral guarantors of the Djibouti Agreement together with the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic States.

Closer to home, I made my first official visit on the 10 and 11 November, to Puntland and Somaliland which had been previously postponed due to the political problems in Mogadishu which required my immediate attention. I held fruitful meetings with Presidents Farole and Silanyo, respectively, on how best we can work together in the promotion of peace and development through the private sector as well as public-private partnership. The two Administrations must be commended for creating enabling environments where private-sector investment can have opportunities to flourish and to attract more foreign investment. It is my hope that the follow-up conference to Istanbul would help to advance these initiatives. UNPOS maintains on-going working relations with a presence in both Somaliland and Puntland,

On the security front, with the fourth Battalion from Burundi deployed to Mogadishu, AMISOM has reached its mandated strength of 8,000 troops. I wish to acknowledge the commitment of both Burundi and Uganda for their participation in AMISOM. The United Nations Security Council's decision to support regional peace initiatives through the assessed budget of the UN demonstrates the commitment and determination of the international community for the reestablishment of peace and stability in Somalia. On 22 December, the Security Council of the United Nations adopted a Resolution which extended the mandate of AMISOM until September 2011 and authorized added strength for AMISOM from 8000 troops to 12000.

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On the political front, the Council reiterated that peace and stability in Somalia depend on reconciliation and effective governance across the whole of Somalia, and encouraged all Somali parties willing to renounce violence and work together to build peace and stability. It also underlined the need for the TFG to make progress on the remaining transitional tasks in particular the constitution making process and the delivery of basic services to the population.

In the arena of Human Rights, I would like to comment here on the AMISOM's Force Commander's statement accepting responsibility for the killing of two civilians and the injury of six and the ordering of a follow-up investigation. This is a very positive step in building confidence and credibility among Somalis and before the international community. It shows that AMISOM is committed to transparency and accountability on the issue of civilian casualties. In its latest Resolution, the Security Council stressed on the responsibility of all parties and armed groups in Somalia to comply with their obligations to protect the civilian population from the effects of hostilities, in particular by avoiding any indiscriminate or excessive use of force.

Finally, as the year comes to an end, I wish to take this moment to remember all the Somalis who have lost their lives in the Somali crisis over the last year, the AMISOM and TFG soldiers who have had to fight under the most severe conditions, the innocent civilians who died, the critically wounded and the families of all the victims. We should also remember and assist all the Somali refugees and IDPs and those families who have been separated from one another due to violence and coerced displacements. Only peace and stability will reverse these extreme conditions. It requires unity of purpose and a strong determination of the Somali people to say NO to war and YES to peace. This twenty year old conflict cannot be resolved by force of arms, but only through an

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inclusive peaceful negotiated settlement. No single group should seek to govern Somalia alone because it can only be a shared endeavor. The Diaspora can have a powerful influence at this defining moment to shape the future of Somalia.

I sincerely hope that 2011 will see a marked improvement in the peace process, in the quality of life for all Somalis, and progress towards relative peace and stability in order to move to the next stages of a peaceful, sovereign and stable Somali nation-state.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Mahiga', is positioned above the printed name.

Ambassador Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga