

A3+1 Statement on the situation in Somalia

21 May 2020

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for convening this important and timely meeting on Somalia. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the A3 + 1, namely Niger, South Africa, Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

At the outset, we would like to thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive report on the situation in Somalia. We also would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), Mr. James Swan; Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Ambassador Francisco Madeira; and Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Ms. Agnes Marcaillou, for their briefing.

Mr. President,

The A3 +1 wishes to address the situation in Somalia, the role of the United Nations through UNSOM and USOS as well as the role of AMISOM.

On the **political front**, we agree with the Secretary General's observation that this year marks a critical period for the advancement of national priorities in Somalia. It is a year that a number of targets and benchmarks set in various policy documents such as the Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) and Somali Transition Plan were set to be achieved. Concerted effort by all Somalis is required for the realisation of these national priorities. However, this requires constructive dialogue between the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States to resolve their differences putting at the top of their concern the challenge posed by the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic in an already fragile situation.

The A3 + 1 echo the sentiments of the Secretary-General that political differences must not be addressed through violence. We are therefore concerned at the

unfortunate armed clashes that erupted in Gedo region (Jubbaland) and Galmudug during the period under review. We, urge the Somali parties to use dialogue as a peaceful means to settle disputes as well as cooperation that is critical to achieve national priorities including the holding of general elections in 2020/2021.

In this regard, we welcome the positive developments of the meeting between President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed “Farmajo” and “Somaliland” President Muse Bihi Abdi “Bihi”. We also welcome the announcement by President Said Mohamed Deni of Puntland of his intention to travel to Mogadishu and to other federal member states to advance dialogue. We view these overtures as positive steps towards addressing the lingering tensions between the FGS and some FMS and an indication of the will of Somali parties to address their differences.

One of the critical priorities confronting Somalia is the preparation and holding of ‘one-person, one vote’ elections. **The A3 + 1 underlines the importance of dialogue, inclusive political participation and resolution of political differences between FGS and FMS is critical to the success of these elections and national cohesion.** Furthermore, we commend the enactment of the Electoral Law and encourage the expeditious formulation of regulations necessary to ensure the implementation and broad support by all federal member states. It is also important to ensure the participation and representation of women, youth and all members of the Somali population, as well as the need to prepare and secure the electoral process. We encourage the international community to continue to mobilise resources to supplement the FGS’ financing of the elections.

Mr. President,

On the **security situation**, we remain deeply concerned by the volatile security situation as demonstrated by the persistent terrorist threat posed by Al Shabaab and the elements of the pro-Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Somalia who continue to carry out terrorist attacks targeted at the Somali National Army (SNA), AMISOM, local security forces, civilians and the UN. Despite the commendable progress and success of joint operations by SNA and AMISOM to recapture towns from Al Shabaab in southern parts of Somalia, the terrorist group continues to launch attacks and assassinations using mortar and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). More has to be done to improve security in Somalia particularly to mitigate mortar and IEDs attacks.

We agree with the calls for the strengthening of the IED threat mitigation capabilities of Somali Security Forces in order to protect themselves and better prevent harm to civilians and critical infrastructure against the increased deployment of IED attacks.

We strongly appreciate the close cooperation and support between Somali National Army (SNA), AMISOM, and UN, in particular UNSOM, UNSOS, UNMAS, as well as international partners in support of the National Security Architecture and National Transitional Plan.

Since its deployment in 2007, AMISOM has been playing an important role in supporting the SNA towards the restoration of security and stability in Somalia. Recent successes of recovering territory by the joint AMISOM and SNA operations in Lower Shebelle bears testimony to the valuable role of AMISOM. There is, however, a need for stabilisation efforts in the recovered territories with further generation in numbers and capacities in both the SNA and police to secure recovered areas, facilitate stabilisation activities and consolidate gains and void relapse.

We urge the Federal Government of Somalia, with the support of the UN, AMISOM, and international partners, to continue the generation, training and resourcing of capable and effective Somali National Forces that will ultimately take over the security responsibilities in line with the Transitional Plan and the National Security Architecture. To this end, we reiterate our previous calls for the international community and partners to mobilize the necessary resources, including the replenishment of the Trust Fund for AMISOM to support the Somali security forces, as they continue to make commendable progress to degrade Al Shabaab and secure and stabilise liberated areas.

Mr. President,

On the **humanitarian situation**, Somalia continues to experience grave humanitarian crisis. Somalia is facing a triple shock of floods, desert locust infestation in addition to COVID-19 pandemic. The threat to food insecurity remains high, despite the favorable seasonal rains. In some parts, unpredictable rainfall due to climate change has resulted in flash flooding, impacting not only on food security but also resulting in death, displacement and the risk of water-borne diseases. The rains have further created conducive conditions and heightened the locust infestation that has affected the whole of Horn of Africa.

We are concerned that the security situation continues to be an impediment to humanitarian operations and assistance to people in need in Somalia. We call upon the international community and humanitarian organizations to continue supporting the FGS and the Somali people in their quest for a peaceful and stable Somalia including providing prompt and adequate funding as well as contributing to the Somalia 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan.

The year 2020 will be remembered in history for the greatest challenge of our generation, the outbreak of the **COVID-19 pandemic**. As with all of us around the globe, Somalia has not been spared from the COVID-19 pandemic. It has recorded over 1,400 cases of COVID-19 as of the middle of May. This pandemic presents specific risks to the country given its numerous challenges and vulnerabilities. It is necessary that measures are taken to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in support for the continuity of peacebuilding and state-building activities in Somalia. We commend the efforts of the Somalia government, United Nations agencies and partners for launching the Somalia COVID-19 Country Preparedness and Response Plan. We note that COVID-19 may exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation, socio-economic, development coordination and security challenges facing Somalia. Additionally, it is important to safe-guard the well-being of those under the employ of AMISOM, SNA and other partners as they continue to provide security, including of facilitating support for the humanitarian assistance critically needed by vulnerable Somalis.

With respect to **economic developments**, we note that Somalia has made significant strides in the past few years in improving its economic prospects. All interventions that were undertaken by the Federal Government of Somalia have yielded positive results. We thus commend the Federal Government of Somalia for reaching the decision point under the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. This has facilitated the clearing of Somalia's arrears. It is also a matter of great satisfaction that the World Bank and IMF have issued a Joint Staff Advisory Note on the 9th National Development Plan 2020-24, noting that the plan exceeded standards of a typical interim poverty reduction strategy. This is a positive and welcomed development given the humanitarian, socioeconomic, resources and other related challenges that are facing Somalia in the period ahead.

It is critical now more than ever that the international community join hands in support of Somalia, including through cooperation, coordination and resource mobilization to mitigate the impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic** but also to ensure that Somalia continues on a positive trajectory of state building and peacebuilding.

Mr. President,

We wish to underline the importance of fostering strong and effective **regional cooperation in the Horn of Africa**, particularly between Somalia and its neighbors. This is necessary to bring peace, stability and development in Somalia and across the region. In this regard, we call on IGAD, African Union, the UN and international community to continue to support efforts towards fostering a strong and effective regional cooperation in the Horn of Africa.

Finally, Mr. President,

We commend the efforts and commitment of the United Nations, AMISOM, Federal Government of Somalia and the international partners for the continuous efforts and progress to bring stabilization, deepening federalism, and state building in Somalia.

In view of the **mandate of AMISOM** ending on 31 May 2020, the A3 + 1 would like to reaffirm our support to AMISOM presence in Somalia as a stabilizing force in support of the SNA. We look forward to fruitful engagements on a new resolution that will continue to illustrate the Council's commitment to supporting the activities of AMISOM by maintaining its current capabilities and authorizing the deployment of AMISOM for another 12 months. **It is our considered view that the 12 months extension will provide the necessary space for Somalia, AMISOM, UN and other partners to assess and deal with the impact of COVID-19, the security situation on the ground, the upcoming elections, the comprehensive review of Somalia Transition Plan, effective force generation and the need to preserve the gains made thus far.**

I thank you!