



## United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

For Immediate Release

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#### **As Somalis celebrate Independence Day, UN Special Representative for Somalia Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga commends progress on constitutional process**

Mogadishu, 01 July 2012 – As Somalia celebrates 52 years of independence, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga, has commended the progress made in the country's constitution-making process.

“This is a moment of optimism for all people of Somalia”, said Dr. Mahiga. “While much has already been achieved, it is of paramount importance to ensure that the process continues to be accountable, legitimate, transparent, participatory and, most importantly, Somali-led.”

An official draft of the Provisional Constitution has been agreed upon and traditional elders are meeting in the capital Mogadishu to appoint delegates to a National Constituent Assembly charged with its adoption. The Assembly is scheduled to convene on 12 July to deliberate and adopt the draft. “The adoption of a provisional constitution will be crucial to re-establishing truly representative government for Somalia, which has been without a functioning central government for more than 20 years,” said the SRSG.

“It is an essential step on the long path towards stability in Somalia and it is critical that we get it right,” he added, noting that a nationwide referendum on a final constitution must be held by the conclusion of the first term of Parliament, four years from now.

Dr. Mahiga added: “We must also begin to look past the end of the transitional period to a Somalia grounded in greater representation and legitimacy and to help prepare for the evolution from selection to election.”

“The Constitutive Assembly is the first meeting of the people's representatives of Somalia of its kind in decades”, the SRSG stated, “its success will be imperative to maintain momentum and to build a stronger, more effective Parliament that gains the confidence of the Somali people for the forthcoming four years.”

He called on all parties to keep to their commitments to work in the national interest as the transitional period comes to a close and urged the international community to continue supporting Somalia as the process continues.