

Focus on Justice and Corrections

Mogadishu, 23 February 2012 – The urgent need for strengthening the judicial and correction sectors in line with the human rights guarantees affirmed in international and national law was stressed in Mogadishu when delegates representing a range of actors from the justice and corrections sectors gathered under the auspices of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS).

The inaugural Justice and Corrections Technical Working Group meeting was attended by the Deputy Minister of Justice, as well as by the directors of the departments of the MoJ, the Deputy Chief Justice, the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General, members of the Judiciary and Custodial Corps. Participants further included legal aid providers including the Somali Bar Association, while the international community was represented by the African Union, European Union, as well as UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme.



"The international community should assist Somalia to re-establish its rule of law institutions. Twenty years of conflict have seriously weakened them but competent legal professionals and a system of laws continue to exist" said Mohamed Mohamed Afrah, Chairperson of the Somali Bar Association. The working group will meet regularly to contribute to the implementation of the National Security and Stabilization Plan, to coordinate policy and legislative development in the area of justice and corrections, to monitor and report on gaps and progress in the areas under its responsibility.

"Promote access to justice and accountability, support for an independent judiciary system, and for humane treatment and rehabilitation in detention are among the key priorities of the Group", said Silvia Lavagnoli, Human Rights Officer for UNPOS.

Along with the police and military technical working groups, which are already functioning, the Justice and Corrections Group becomes the third operational technical working group under the Joint Security Committee, the main coordinating high-level mechanism for justice and security sector development in Somalia.

Respect for the rule of law, justice and accountability have been mentioned consistently in a number of Security Council Resolutions on Somalia since 2008.

Somalia is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention Against Torture and the International Convention Against Racial Discrimination, and to the four Geneva Conventions.