



UNITED NATIONS POLITICAL OFFICE FOR SOMALIA
UNPOS

Nairobi, 4 December 2011

As-Salaamu Alaikum,

Dear friends,

My most sincere greetings to you all both inside Somalia and in the Diaspora abroad. Once again, as the year draws to a close, I am writing to you all to update you on the fast moving developments in the region since I last spoke with you nearly two months ago.

I am pleased to report that aid is reaching some of those most affected by the dire humanitarian situation. Conditions have eased in three of the six districts that were declared to be in famine, but the crisis is not over. The lives of some 250,000 people are still at immediate risk if they are not helped urgently. The international community must continue and expand its efforts, even as images of suffering fade from the front pages.

In this regard, I must commend the excellent work that new partners such as Turkey, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States are doing – not only in providing humanitarian assistance but also in sending its own people to Mogadishu to work on the ground. I relayed this message and thanked the Turkish Government and people when I visited Ankara in early November.

As you know I have been visiting Mogadishu regularly and I am impressed by the bustling, busy streets and the resilience of those of you in the city who have re-opened your shops and cafes. Your capital city is now a place of freshly painted walls and builders' scaffolding supporting ongoing repairs to homes and businesses. But of course very serious risks remain. We always knew that once the extremists were driven out of their strongholds in the city, they would resort to terror tactics. The Transitional Federal Government forces and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is doing what it can to help stabilize and consolidate but almost every day we hear tragic reports of explosions killing innocent civilians including women who were clearing the rubbish to make the city a better place to live.

On the security side, since my last letter, Kenya launched an operation into Somali territory after a series of kidnappings in Kenya. I have noted the Joint Communiqué signed by Kenya and the Somali Transitional Federal Government which stated that Al-Shabaab is a common enemy to be fought jointly. I have also seen the communiqués of both IGAD and the Extraordinary Summit of East African States supporting the joint operation, suggesting that Kenya consider integrating its forces to AMISOM and requesting that Ethiopia consider assisting in the efforts against Al-Shabaab.

At the same time, progress on the security front must go hand in hand with tangible gains on the political side, and we must move slowly and carefully on the question of local and regional administrations and encourage them to join the Roadmap process.



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Our main focus at the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) remains on implementing the Roadmap on ending the transitional period. The Roadmap itself is divided into four benchmarks – security, constitution and elections, outreach and reconciliation and good governance. We have made steady progress towards meeting deadlines – the National Security and Stabilization Plan has been approved by the Council of Ministers and referred to Parliament, the Joint Security Committee met and many of the key committees are now in place and working. UNPOS facilitated the holding of a Civil Society Meeting in Mogadishu which brought together more than 60 participants, including representatives of the principal signatories of the Roadmap who endorsed the Roadmap and called for a principle role in its implementation. But there are also areas where progress has stalled and we must all redouble our efforts to move forward for the sake of the country, even when it means making painful compromises.

As the process continues, it is inevitable that not everyone will agree with every decision. This is a healthy part of a democratic process—lively debate should be encouraged and Somalis should make their voices heard, especially in the ongoing process of finalizing the Constitution. However, there are those who are so afraid of change that they would undermine the entire process for their own purposes. You may remember that the Roadmap was first mentioned in the Kampala Accord which ended the impasse between the President and Speaker. The Accord stated that Government and Parliament shall work together with the international community to establish a roadmap with benchmarks, timelines and compliance mechanisms for the implementation of the priority tasks. The Accord was signed on 9 June 2011 by President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed for the executive and the Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden and witnessed by President Museveni of Uganda and myself. The Accord, and therefore the Roadmap which makes up a major part of the agreement, was subsequently ratified overwhelmingly by the Somali Parliament soon afterwards. The Roadmap was discussed in the Parliament at an extraordinary session and signed by the Prime Minister on behalf of the Transitional Federal Institutions—including Parliament—at the conclusion of the Mogadishu Consultative Meeting from 4 – 6 September. The process has been inclusive and broadly consultative.

To ensure political stability and cooperation between the Government and the Parliament, the Kampala Accord refers to a Political Bureau, now called the Regional Political Initiative which oversees and monitor compliance of the TFIs. This Initiative, comprising the Heads of State and Government of the regional groupings IGAD and the East African Community with the participation of UNPOS and the AU, is empowered to evoke appropriate measures to ensure compliance. I will also shortly be convening a meeting of the International Coordination and Monitoring Group which will look at progress made so far on the Roadmap and make recommendations. The UN Security Council has also made it clear that future assistance will be contingent on compliance and that action will be taken against those who are working against the process. Likewise, the mandate of the Eritrea-Somalia Sanctions Committee UN Sanctions Monitoring Group now includes a provision authorizing the body to consider further consequences for non-compliance with and obstruction of the Roadmap. The message is clear: the Roadmap is the way forward and spoilers seeking to derail the process will not be tolerated.



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While the UN and the international community is offering whatever assistance it can, it is ultimately up to you the Somalis to determine whether or not the Roadmap succeeds. While I believe we have the buy-in of a large number of Somalis and their leadership—I was particularly encouraged by the uniform support we received from the Civil Society at the recent consultative meeting in Mogadishu. There will always be some those who believe that they will benefit more from keeping the status quo. On this point, let me be clear and speak frankly to you: political participation and engaged, constructive dissent is welcomed by UNPOS and by the International Community as a whole. But there is no place for those who work to unravel years of work advancing the cause of peace in Somalia.

I believe we are all working towards the same ends – to make Somalia a safe, secure and prosperous country once more. The Roadmap will not solve all of the problems but it is a central part of the solution and I look to all of you to help make it work.

Thank you for your continuing help and support.

Warm regards,
Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga