

**Statement by Dr. Auguste P. Mahiga
at the High Level Event in Cairo**

Challenges in Somalia

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be with you all here in Cairo.

The Djibouti Agreement was perceived by the international Community as a window of opportunity to bring Somalia back to the international arena. It is sad to notice that two years after and despite calls for dialogue by the Transitional Federal Government and efforts by the international community, conflict that does not seem to end. It has even evolved to the extent that it has gradually come to pose a threat to not only Somalia, or indeed the region, but the entire international community. The recent bombings in Kampala, the suicide attack in Mogadishio on the 24 August as well as the unprecedented rise of piracy off the coast of Somalia are indications of the magnitude of the conflict in Somalia. Individually and collectively, we need to urgently address this situation that constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security.

What shall we do to address the Somali Crisis?

We need to agree on the international community's agenda and approach to resolve the conflict. While a lot of efforts have been made by the international community on Somalia, the question remains as to the final objective of our political and financial support to the Somali Institutions. Indeed, the deteriorating security situation on the ground suggests an appropriate response to dissuade the antigovernment elements to further destabilize the TFG. However a military solution as appropriate as it could be should be accompanied by a political agenda. The recent agreements by the Transitional Federal Government with Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a (ASWJ), with Puntland on security and the constitution, and the Kampala framework, involving the TFG and the governments of Puntland and Somaliland are steps in the right direction. We now need to consolidate them. We also need to facilitate dialogue between the government and groups outside the process that are ready to abandon the logic of violence. It has become urgent to broaden the base for peace and isolate those who oppose it.

We also need to strengthen the security agenda. Although AMISOM is increasing its strength, it needs the necessary resources and capabilities to do its work more effectively. Moreover, support should be given to the TFG forces in terms of equipment, training and payment of salary in order to have a cohesive security force. The Somali security forces are still in their nascent stage. They need to be backed by proper structures and conditions that most armed forces take for granted elsewhere in the world, but are severely lacking in the Somali context. A properly organized security force is critical to improve the security in Somalia, not just in Mogadishu.

Even though IGAD continues to take bold steps towards consolidating peace in Somalia, the threat posed by the anti peace elements, pirates, and other criminal activities goes well beyond the region. More concerted and decisive action is required on our part.

There is need to build the capacity and institutions of the TFG. The international community has embarked on some of these programmes through the training of Somalia's security forces and police, as well as the personnel of key government ministries. In addition, there is need to help the TFG with equipping the ministries and other institutions, as well as providing them with logistical support.

The Government and Parliament need resources and capacity to their work. Currently, we have many ministers without ministries, and ministries without functional premises and basic equipment. Above all government officials and members of parliament have to be paid when the TFG itself has no source of income. The government needs a mechanism whereby it can generate its own income and the spend it. This too has to be developed. In Somalia, we are re-building the state structure from scratch. We have to work together to restore functioning institutions of state to Somalia.

The Somali people have long suffered from this incessant conflict. They need relief and support. The conflict has thus far been the biggest employer, especially of Somali youth who have been the cannon-fodder of this conflict. We need to change this situation and provide alternative means of livelihood for Somali youth and income generation for families. People need to see the peace dividend. There has to be a visible change in their lives.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have now entered the last twelve months of the Transitional period of the TFIs. In this period, the institutions have to complete a number of tasks including the completion of the constitutions followed by elections of a new political dispensation in Somalia.

Supporting dialogue is critical to managing the remaining period of the transition. The TFG needs all the support it can get in its efforts to reach out to groups which have not joined the peace process.

The Members of Parliament and the security forces need stipends for their day-to-day living. The stipends have to be paid on regular and sustainable basis to prevent them from being demoralized.

The population on the ground expects the TFG to deliver some services. Weak and fragile as the TFG is, it should be helped in this regard. The Government should be able to deliver services in the areas which fall under its control. This will help it shore up its legitimacy before the people it currently administers.

While we help the TFG establish its credibility and functionality in Somalia, we also have an obligation to support the parts of Somalia which have been performing better. Even though Puntland has begun to experience security and economic challenges, we have to work with its government to help extricate it from these new worrying developments. Similarly, we have to laud the election results for Somaliland and help it progress on the path of peaceful economic development that it has chosen. At the same time, we have to work closely with all the entities and authorities in Somalia to ensure greater cooperation and coherence between them.

These are just some of the challenges we face in Somalia. However, what is needed to confront these crises is a strong commitment on the part of the international community, coupled with coherent and coordinated policies, and backed up with decisive action. Somalia is not just the problem of the Somalis, or of the region, or even of Africa. It is a global problem which needs to be dealt effectively and comprehensively by the entire world community.

I thank you.