



Issue 4, April 2012

UNPOS Quarterly

Advancing Peace & Reconciliation for Somali People



UNPOS relocates to Mogadishu

From the desk of the SRSG



SRSG Augustine P. Mahiga

Welcome to the fourth edition of the UNPOS Quarterly Magazine. It pleases me to be writing to you from Mogadishu, where I relocated my office on 24 January. I have settled in the capital where our close proximity to and daily engagement with our Somali interlocutors is helping us to “make up for lost time.” I continue to encourage other members of the international community to join us here without delay to show their continued engagement with Somalia and to be on the ground to help advance the peace process.

The past few months have been full of dramatic events. The country has been embroiled in a parliamentary crisis which has frozen even the most basic activities of the lawmakers. Despite the sobering backdrop of the current situation, it is also a moment of great opportunity. We are successfully meeting significant milestones in the Roadmap to end the transition. Following the first Somali National Consultative Constitutional Conference in Garowe, Puntland State, in December, we held a second successful Constitutional Conference from 15-17 February. This event, known as Garowe II, articulated a clear vision for Somalia’s future government, comprising a federal system with an upper and lower house and membership comprised of at least 30 per cent women. Adoption of the draft Constitution by the National Constituent Assembly has been

set for 22 May 2012.

If there is a key point that has emerged from the Garowe process, which has been broadly inclusive and has relied heavily on the input and influence of a wide array of civil society members, it is the realization that the transitional processes are neither exclusive nor top down. A Constituent Assembly that looks like Somalia – with as many as 1,000 Somalis from various communities – will be established. Representation will come from the grassroots. This will require an enormous amount of work to meet the deadlines that have been set. The world is watching and we have no time to lose.

With Security Council Resolution 2036 (22 February 2012) expansion of and the UN’s support to AMISOM, the AU forces will be in a position to further stabilize the security situation in Mogadishu and beyond. Already AMISOM has made significant gains, and with the addition of the Kenyan Defense Forces, we expect that this trend will continue. As the number of recovered areas grows, it will be a priority to support the TFG to promote social reconciliation, restore law, order and justice and encourage the timely formation of local administrations through consultative and inclusive processes. As I have often said, the Somali population must feel the benefit of the peace dividend as soon as possible.

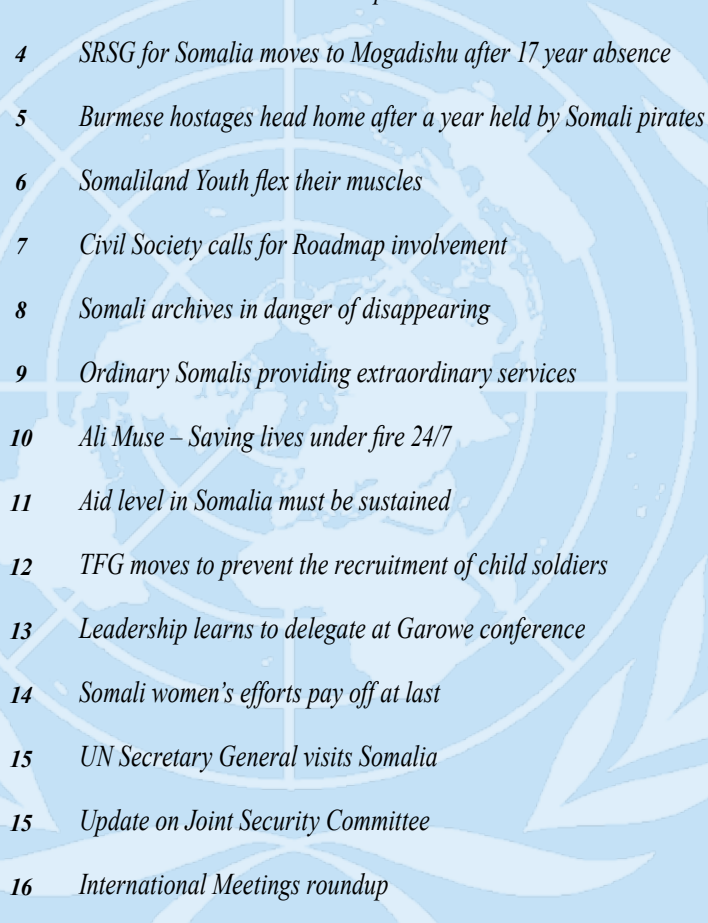
Another message I shared with the Security Council was a word of warning to

‘spoilers’ - those who are benefiting from exploiting the protracted conflict that has prevailed in Somalia over the past two decades. Let me emphasize an important point: there is a role for all people of goodwill in the political process. Those who do not want stability in Somalia or who are trying to circumvent the political process, whether groups or individuals and regardless of their political or religious affiliations, must be identified and deterred. I remain deeply concerned by the conscious efforts by groups and individuals to derail the Roadmap, engineer another extension of the transition and to obstruct inclusiveness which the Roadmap and the Garowe process seek to accomplish.

This is a remarkable time for Somalia: there is a new sense of energy in the air as we work to meet the high benchmarks set for the country. It can be felt in the international fora, such as the London Conference, which injected a fresh momentum and demonstrated the level of amongst the international community. It can be seen amongst the Somali actors who are reinvigorated with a sense of urgency and direction leading to the end of the transition and a new phase of Somali history. The Somali status quo will change and the way forward is being led by you, the Somali people. We stand beside you and shall continue to do so. ■

SRSG Augustine P. Mahiga

In this issue

- 
- 2 *SRSB Letter to the Somali People*
 - 4 *SRSB for Somalia moves to Mogadishu after 17 year absence*
 - 5 *Burmese hostages head home after a year held by Somali pirates*
 - 6 *Somaliland Youth flex their muscles*
 - 7 *Civil Society calls for Roadmap involvement*
 - 8 *Somali archives in danger of disappearing*
 - 9 *Ordinary Somalis providing extraordinary services*
 - 10 *Ali Muse – Saving lives under fire 24/7*
 - 11 *Aid level in Somalia must be sustained*
 - 12 *TFG moves to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers*
 - 13 *Leadership learns to delegate at Garowe conference*
 - 14 *Somali women's efforts pay off at last*
 - 15 *UN Secretary General visits Somalia*
 - 15 *Update on Joint Security Committee*
 - 16 *International Meetings roundup*
 - 17 *DDR for a stable and durable peace in Somalia*

UNPOS

Contact:
Public Information Office, United Nations Political Office for Somalia
Email: unpos_pio@un.org
Website: www.unpos.unmissions.org

SRSg for Somalia moves to Mogadishu after 17 year absence

By Nick Birnback, Chief of Public Information, UNPOS



Ambassador Mahiga meets with President at Villa Somalia. Credit: Stuart Price AU/UN IST

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga, formally opened the UNPOS office in Mogadishu on Tuesday, 24 January 2012.

Dr. Mahiga, who flew into the international airport with a delegation from the UN Political Office for Somalia, said he was delighted and humbled to be able to move the Mission's headquarters to Mogadishu after a 17 year absence. "Now UNPOS should no longer stand for the Political Office for Somalia but should now be known as the Political Office in Somalia," he said.

As the UN flag waved in a strong Indian Ocean breeze, the SRSg was given an enthusiastic welcome by the Somali Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali and a large group including Somali officials, Mogadishu- and Nairobi-based diplomats and the Deputy Force Commander of the African Union Peacekeepers. Dr. Mahiga

said that being based in Mogadishu would help UNPOS work more closely with its partners including the Somali Government, UN agencies, civil society and ordinary Somalis. He praised the foreign diplomats based in Mogadishu and said he hoped that more embassies and UN agencies would be inspired to join them.

"I hope that the UNPOS move to Somalia will herald the beginning of a new era of cooperation and political engagement," said Dr. Mahiga. "We have a lot of work to do. In the next few months, the Somalis will agree on a new constitution along with the reform of Parliament and other key tasks that form the basis of a Roadmap that we are helping the Government to implement."

The SRSg travelled to Villa Somalia, the Presidential Palace complex where he presented his credentials to President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed in front of

a large audience of Somali officials, diplomats and the media and then held private discussions with a number of Somali high-level officials.

Afterwards he travelled back to the International Airport to review a Guard of Honour of the African Union troops and pay tribute to the sacrifices of both the AU and Somali Security Services in advancing the cause of peace.

The SRSg also spoke by phone to the UN Secretary-General to inform him of his arrival. It was the Secretary-General who announced during his landmark visit to Mogadishu last month that UNPOS would be relocating to Mogadishu.

The last SRSg to be based in Mogadishu, James Victor Gbeho of Ghana,



Locals dance and sing traditional songs during the arrival of SRSg. Credit: Stuart Price AU/UN IST



SRSg welcomed with AMISOM guard of honour. Credit: Stuart Price AU/UN IST

was with the UN Operations in Somalia II (UNISOM II) and left in early 1995 when the mission concluded. UNPOS, based in Nairobi, was established shortly afterwards. However staff from other UN agencies remained in Somalia throughout the following years and there are currently more than 900 UN employees in Somalia.

"I believe that this is a moment of great opportunity for Somalia," said the SRSg. "We will do everything we can to help but ultimately peace in Somalia will be achieved by the Somalis themselves. I will miss Nairobi, but I am looking forward to setting up my new office in Mogadishu and getting down to work." ■

Burmese hostages head home after a year held by Somali pirates

By Donna Cusumano, Public Information Officer, UNPOS



Burmese hostages with Embassy official in Nairobi before heading home



Embassy official with one of the 13 hostages released



Former hostage speaking to IOM staff

On 31 October 2011, after spending nearly 16 months as hostages of Somali pirates, a very relieved group of sailors from Burma finally set out for home from Jomo Kenyatta Airport in Nairobi. The 13 men had been part of the crew of the *P.V. Prantalay 12*, a Thai fishing boat hijacked approximately 1200 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia in international waters by Somali pirates on 18 April 2010.

While they waited for their flight, staff from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) handed out some small comfort items including basic clothing, tennis shoes, travel bags and snacks to the grateful group. Pan Aung, a 36-year-old father of two and the only one of the group able to communicate in basic English, said that the ordeal had been extremely traumatic. Much of the time, he said, they did not understand what was taking place. They had no idea if they would live to see their loved ones again.

During his long stay in captivity, Aung witnessed the ill-treatment of others being held by the pirates. He said the hostages had no access to clean drinking water and that many of them fell ill after drinking salt water. Some had not made it out alive although it was unclear what exactly had happened and how many were involved.

The hostages were finally released by their captors on 6 August this year, but their ordeal was not quite over. The group had to remain in Garowe, the capital of the Puntland State of Somalia while UN officers in Nairobi and New York worked to procure necessary travel documents. Officers from IOM, UNPOS, UNDP and UNHCR coordinated closely to facilitate the safe and voluntary repatriation of the crew, who were also given counseling.

Once the papers were in order the men finally left for neighbouring Kenya. An official from the Consular and Legal Affairs Department of the Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who traveled to Nairobi to escort the young men back to Myanmar, joined them at the airport to debrief them and distribute official travel documents. UNPOS staff accompanied officers from IOM for an informal send-off prior to their departure.

According to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), as of early March 2012, 263 hostages and 14 vessels remain in captivity by Somali pirates. The UN agencies and the international community are coordinating closely to address piracy through preventative measures such as employment schemes for potential piracy recruits including enlistment in a coastguard and counter piracy media campaigns. They are also working on establishing prisons, building the Somali judiciary system and addressing issues often used as excuses for piracy including illegal fishing. ■

Democracy in Somaliland has advanced in recent years with a series of elections including the elections of the first local councils in 2002, the first presidential elections in 2003, parliamentary elections in 2005 and the second presidential elections in June 2010.

However, only the elders were part of this process. Young people, meaning those under the age of 35, were not allowed to stand as candidates in any elections. Between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of the Somaliland population is under the age of 30 according to the Youth Status Survey Report by the Dutch affiliate of the non-governmental organization Oxfam and UNDP Human Index Report, although only a quarter of them are literate. Currently, there are about 25,000 students enrolled in 70 schools and about 12,000 college students enrolled in ten universities in Somaliland. Most of those graduating from high schools, colleges and universities are unemployed and many end up as illegal immigrants in Europe.

During the 2010 election campaign, both the main parties included youth development as a top priority. The Kulmiye Party, the winning party, made several commitments such as considering youth for the government posts, promoting youth in the executive decision making process and placing them in local government to promote good governance. University students helped the Electoral Commissions and participated at all levels from national to district level.

The new administration took power in July 2010 but critics say it has not carried out many of its commitments to the young people. So far the administration has appointed fewer than ten young people to the posts of Director General and Department Directors. While this is an improvement on previous administrations, many say it does not go far enough.

Somaliland National Youth Organization (SONYO), an active civil society and national youth umbrella, has stepped in to fill the vacuum and started lobbying for a new political direction for the youth, employment and the beginning of good governance. SONYO was established in 2003 to unite the voice of the youth and find a viable and fitting platform for youth political participation. It is involved in programmes on youth employment, education, human rights, democratization and leadership.

Due to the efforts of SONYO, in October 2011 the Somaliland parliament approved an amendment to Law No. 20 to reduce the age of local council candidate from 35 to 25 years. A month later, the House of Elders approved the amendment and it was signed President Silanyo. Youth are also putting aside clan divisions and mobilizing in to prepare themselves to take part in the upcoming local council elections scheduled to take place in April. ■

Somaliland youth flex their muscles

By Dahir Mohamed Dahir, National Civil Affairs Officer, UNPOS Hargeisa



Approx 70% of the Somaliland population are under 30 years old, Credit: AU/UN IST

Civil Society calls for Roadmap involvement

By Shinuna Karume, Civil Affairs Officer, UNPOS



UNPOS civil society conference. Credit: Stuart Price AU/UN IST

Representative, genuine, authentic – these are a few of the words that come to mind when one is faced with the challenging task of choosing “real” civil society representatives in today’s Somalia. During the 20 years of conflict with no functioning state, Somali civil society gradually filled the vacuum in the provision of basic services (health, water, education, etc.), humanitarian aid, security and stabilization, building peace and promoting reconciliation, and supporting development initiatives.

While some of the administrations saw them as competitors for resources from the international community, the governing bodies gradually realized the need to work together and engage the civil society due to their extensive experience, structures and capacity to serve the people.

This realization led to the Civil Society Conference in Mogadishu from 26 - 28 November 2011 which aimed at bringing Civil Society into the process of implementing the Roadmap for the end of the Somalia transition. It was agreed that

the success of the four priority areas of the Roadmap where progress is essential hinges on inclusivity. In the past the UN has made sure that Somali Civil Society is involved in key processes – for example in the preparation of the draft constitution.

The CSO consultative conference in Mogadishu was the first attempt in years of the TFI and regional entities to reach out to other players in civil society. A third of the 60 Civil Society members who attended the conference were women. The conference initially began with some questioning the delayed call for their involvement, three months after the first Mogadishu meeting to lay out the Roadmap for transition in September 2011. As discussions progressed however, enthusiasm built into a strong cry for partnership in the implementation of the Roadmap and for involvement in the oversight mechanism.

The civil society made recommendations to support of the implementation of the Roadmap. On security, they requested “to strengthen their relationship and coop-

eration with the Government and its security agencies at the national, regional and district levels through the agreed modalities.” They also requested to “be permitted to participate in existing committees and subcommittees on the implementation of the Roadmap,” and also to “have an oversight role to hold the TFIs, regional administrations, ASWJ accountable for the implementation of the Roadmap.” It was also acknowledged that the success of the Roadmap depends on the support it can receive from the Somali people and a call was made for all efforts and means to be invested to this effect.

The conference concluded in high spirits and with renewed enthusiasm. Civil society committed themselves to take up the task of outreach to augment support of the Roadmap at the community and grassroots level. With the evident commitment by the TFIs and entities as well as the civil society the hope and prospects of a success in the implementation of the Roadmap is looking more and more likely. ■

Somalia's archives in danger of disappearing

By Susannah Price, Public Information Officer, UNPOS

Somalis who return to Mogadishu for the first time since the conflict began 20 years ago often lament that there is little left of the beautiful, cultured city they once knew. Much has indeed changed. However, hidden in a backroom of the Information Ministry is a treasure trove of Somali history – the archives of Radio Mogadishu.

The dark room is crammed full of reels of quarter inch tapes - lovingly filed in their dusty cardboard boxes on the shelves, spilling over onto the desks, tables and floor with their contents written by hand. There are, according to official figures, more than 35,000 tapes in the archives. More than half of them are songs but they also include drama, poetry, religious programmes, speeches and broadcasts in foreign languages including Italian, Arabic and English.

The archive collection began in 1951 – the same year that Radio Mogadishu was launched. The collection began slowly but built up over the years. Most of the songs

are love songs although some contained hidden criticism of the Governments and poets often ended up being imprisoned for their efforts. There are also welcome songs which range from one written for Communist China's first and longest serving leader, Zhou Enlai, to one which has just been composed for the UNPOS deployment to Mogadishu. Many of the songs are still extremely popular and are still being rebroadcast on Radio Mogadishu today, as are the plays and poetry.

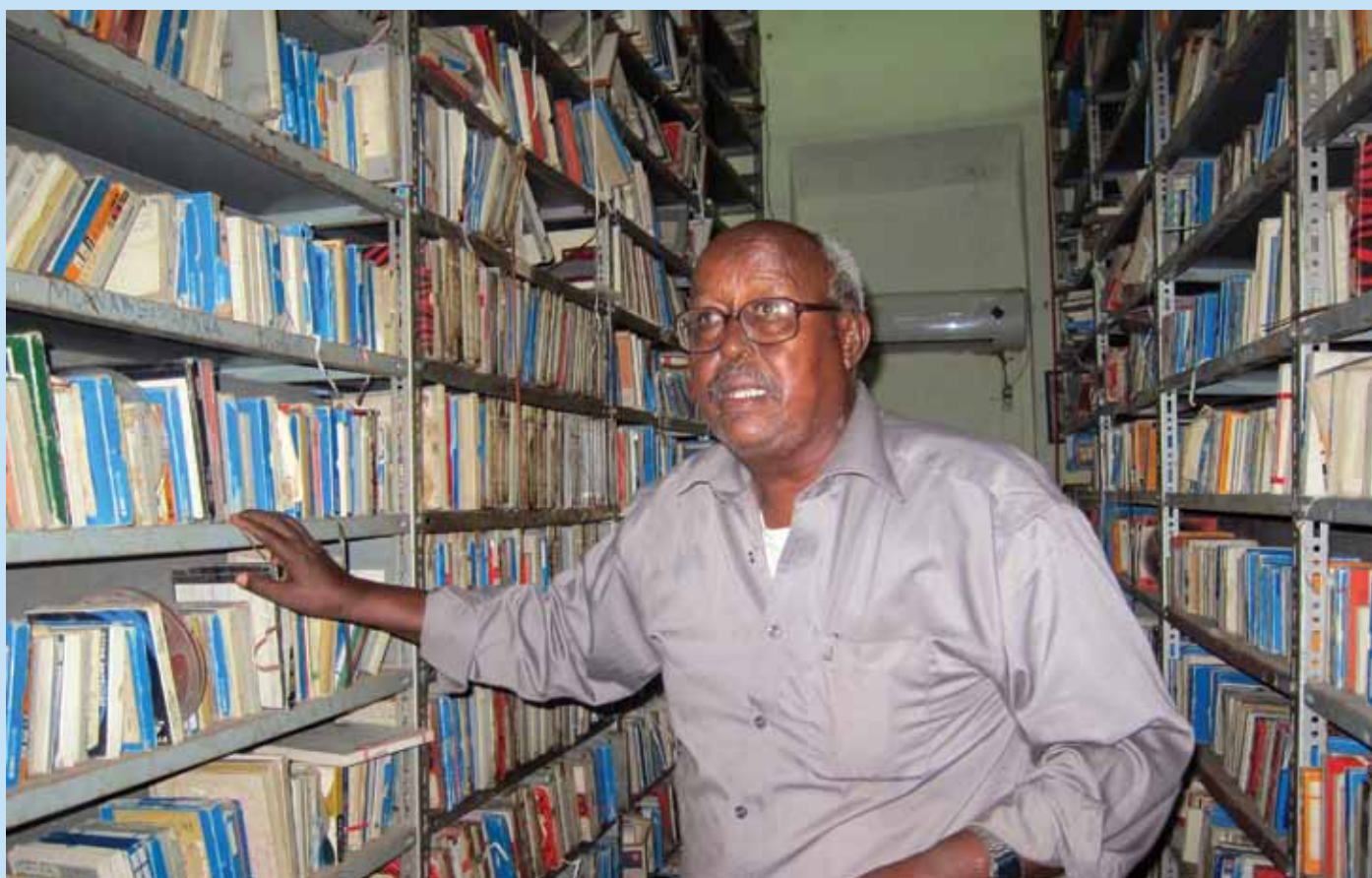
Unfortunately the news and current affairs programs were never archived. However there is a short, historic recording of the declaration of Independence of Somalia at midnight on 1 July 1960 as well as songs written about Somali independence.

The archives contain some 2000 speeches by the former President Siad Barre and 800 speeches by other Presidents who came before him. There are speeches by many Prime Ministers although the recordings of the first ever Prime Minister Abdullahi Isse were either deleted or lost.

There are also more than 400 speeches by the warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidede, who overthrew Siad Barre. Both Aidede and Ali Mahdi Muhammed, the first President after Siad Barre, clearly understood the importance of the archives and sent guards to protect them against being damaged or looting in the fighting.

The current archivist is Abshir Hashi Ali who has been there since the fall of President Siad Barre in 1991. He says very little has been archived during the past 20 years of conflict and nothing is currently being archived due to lack of capacity even though Radio Mogadishu is back up and running and broadcasting 24 hours a day.

The most pressing concern is that the condition of the tapes is deteriorating fast. Some have already rotted and are beyond repair. There have been various offers to digitize the tapes to preserve them although so far about five per cent have undergone this process. The Government is now appealing for help to preserve this important historic record. ■



Somali archives with archivist Abshir Hashi Ali

Ordinary Somalis providing extraordinary services in Puntland

By Lucie Sewe, UNPOS Magazine

At the start of the 21st century, many Puntland residents may not have considered books to be their most pressing need as they were confronted by other more dire issues: displaced people fleeing the conflict in Mogadishu, piracy along the coast and a largely illiterate population. However Abdurashid Ali, now the Executive Director of the Puntland Library and Resource Center, felt differently. He had serious concerns about the situation in Puntland, where access to education and information was a big challenge. This motivated him to work towards development of a library but he never envisaged the possibility of it growing into a fully fledged resource center that would later serve a cross section of Puntland residents and other Somalis.

Mr. Ali was then a member of the Somalia-Puntland diaspora, living in Minnesota. He began promoting the idea to his friends who offered him overwhelming support. Mr. Ali and other members of the Puntland diaspora began the necessary ground work. They developed a proposal that brought in financial and other forms of assistance from the diaspora, Puntland residents, and other donors. The Puntland Ministry of Finance bought the land, UNDP contributed towards the construction, provided computers, communication facilities and furniture, and later funded economists and human resource experts who developed a strategic plan and mobilized financial resources from donors.

The Puntland Library was established in 2007, with a primary objective to provide a neutral place for Puntland residents to raise their literacy levels and to access information on different subjects, irrespective of who they were. In time, the library became very popular. The initial success encouraged the team to expand the services and turn the library into a resource center.

The Puntland Library and Resource Center (PLRC) is the first and only public library and resource center in the region. It provides a comprehensive collection of reading materials, (both fiction and non-fiction), a computer laboratory with internet and information technology services, large conference halls, a coffee shop, a



Puntland Resource Centre

terrace for informal discussions and much more. It has grown into a hub for civil society and has more than 40,000 books that address management, governance and capacity-building; subjects of interest to many Somalis.

The center now offers training to residents on conflict resolution, listening and negotiation skills. The youth can access books on various subjects such as physics, mathematics and science. In addition they are trained on issues such as human rights issues, drugs, HIV, and practical skills in communication, accounting and technology. The center has promoted a culture of reading. Mr. Ali describes it as “a place to read: a neutral place that serves the needs of many.”

The Executive Director is supported by a team of 24 staff members including librarians, youth experts, trainers, security personnel and support staff. PLRC operates under an NGO, the Somali Family Service (SFS) which has its headquarters in Garowe, two branches in Bossaso and Galkacyo and a liaison office in Nairobi.

In addition to PLRC, SFS has facilitated several successful workshops, including forums on promoting human rights in Puntland, democracy and governance, peace-building, capacity-building and civic education among others. The Resource Center offers a critical link between community services and democracy, demonstrating the tangible benefits

of the democratic system of governance.

A wide range of residents use the centre. SFS targets the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups such as young people, single mothers, the physically challenged and minorities. Politicians also hold their meetings at the center. PLRC has so far supplied two million books to schools, the administration and community NGOs around the region.

Mr. Abshir Abshir, the Regional Programme Coordinator for SFS, says some of the major successes include keeping the youth away from harmful activities, developing village elders into peace makers, and involving a wide cross section of the local population in lobbying for peace.

Mr. Abshir outlined the challenges facing the center. “Updating the books and maintaining the facility is quite costly,” he said. Library services are offered free of charge. PLRC does not generate adequate income from cybercafé usage and hiring out of conference rooms, thus placing heavy reliance on donor support. Various donors and partners (Somalis and Non-Somalis) continue to provide assistance in form of money, books, training and so on but still, a lot more is required to sustain PLRC.

According to Mr. Abshir, the ultimate vision is to develop PLRC into a capacity-building center for the local government and to establish a branch resource center in Mogadishu in the near future. ■

Ali Muse – Saving lives under fire 24/7

By Lucie Sewe, UNPOS Magazine



Ali Muse – Lifeline Africa

For many years, Ali Muse, a small-scale businessman like many Mogadishu residents, could only watch helplessly as bombs and bullets injured and killed innocent civilians around him. Such incidents were inevitable in a city that was going through endless war and, he believed, little could be done about it.

However one day in 2008, he was in the main business area, Bakara Market, when he saw a man who had just been wounded by a mortar. Writhing in pain and bleeding profusely, the helpless man finally died as there was no one to offer basic first aid and no ambulance service to take him to hospital. This awful incident disturbed Muse so much that he decided to organize local people, particularly businessmen, to contribute towards an effort to save lives – and he set up the only ambulance service in Mogadishu.

The ambulance service operates under a non-profit organization, Lifeline Africa, which was started in December 2008 by a group of Somali volunteers led by Ali Muse (or Cali Muuse, as his name is spelt in Somali). A telecommunications company called Nation Link Telecom donated money for staff allowances, communication equipment and fuel. The service began with five ambulances and fifty volunteers. Later Nation Link donated two more ambulances and an additional one came from the UK-based organization Ambulances for Africa. The rescue services are free and Lifeline operates a toll-

free number for those needing assistance.

Ali says the early days were difficult and his employees themselves often became victims. Two of their drivers were shot dead, while others fled due to recurrent threats. Ambulances were also attacked and burnt. With time, the residents began to accept the services. Once he tried to rescue a mother and her new born baby who had been wounded by fighting groups near the presidential palace, and had requested for an ambulance service at 2:00 am. While trying to rescue them, one of the armed groups ambushed the ambulance, causing an accident. A second ambulance braved the gunfire and brought the two successfully to a health center.

Every night when 42-year-old Ali retires to bed, he can never predict how long he will sleep or what the events of the following day could be. But he is always ready to drop everything to help when the call comes. “I voluntarily help the vulnerable people in the war-torn city,” he said, “I offer 24/7 emergency and non-emergency voluntary service to the wounded, the weak and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in and around Mogadishu.”

Ali wakes up very early each day, to listen to news about the situation in

(help desk staff, drivers, nurses etc.) to expect calls for ambulance services from any part of Mogadishu from schools, IDP camps, offices, hospitals or anywhere else citywide. The team provides the necessary first aid and takes the victims to the nearest hospitals or health posts for further attention. He says life in Mogadishu is very unpredictable but that someone has to provide this very essential but risky service. “It is my basic obligation to serve my city,” says Ali who is often quoted in the Somali and international media as the ambulance services operator giving details about casualties.

For a long time, Lifeline Africa was the only organization providing ambulance services in Mogadishu. However Ali says some hospitals in Mogadishu have recently introduced ambulance services. “It is very fulfilling to know that what we started has now become exemplary.”

Ali, who lives with his family in Mogadishu, says Lifeline carried 6,753 victims to hospital in 2009, 7,100 in 2010, and 5,242 in 2011. Due to the rough roads and high vehicle maintenance costs the ambulances often break down. The number of volunteers has also decreased to 23 as Lifeline is not able to sustain them.



Ambulance on duty in Mogadishu

Mogadishu. He then assembles his colleagues for a briefing. “You will find us every morning discussing our plan for the day,” he said. Depending on the situation, he alerts his drivers and other volunteers

Still, Ali intends to extend these services to other parts of Somalia in the near future. He hopes that one day, Somalia will be stable enough for him to hand over the job to the rightful authorities. ■

Aid levels in Somalia must be sustained to consolidate humanitarian gains

By Ari Gaitanis and Roberta Russo, Public Information Officers, OCHA

On 3 February 2012, the UN declared the end of famine conditions in Somalia. The combination of a massive scale-up in humanitarian assistance and an exceptional harvest has indeed helped to improve the humanitarian situation. Even so, the international community cannot let down its guard: generous support is still needed for the one third of the population that still require food, clean water and other assistance to survive.

Almost three-quarters of the 2.34 million people in humanitarian crisis are in the southern regions of Somalia. Malnutrition and mortality rates in many parts of southern Somalia continue to be amongst the highest in the world – and the worst in Somalia since the famine 20 years ago. “The gains are fragile and will be reversed without continued support,” said Mark Bowden, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia. “There are 1.7 million people in southern Somalia still in crisis.”

With rapid support from donors, the response to the famine was unprecedented. Within 90 days of the declaration of famine in July, the number of people in Somalia receiving food each month more than tripled to 2.6 million. Proof that the scale-up in humanitarian assistance started to push back the famine initially came in mid-November when the Somalia Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FS-NAU) and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) announced that three areas of Somalia – Bay, Bakool and Lower Shabelle regions – improved from famine to the pre-famine phase.

Somalia nonetheless remains one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world. Despite the scale-up of humanitarian operations, the crisis is expected to last well into 2012 and will probably get worse due in August. The escalation in fighting and the ban on several humanitarian agencies working in southern regions further complicates aid efforts. Almost one million Somalis live as refugees in neighbouring countries. Some 300,000 fled hunger and war in Somalia in 2011 alone and hundreds of thousands remain internally dis-



Child eating porridge. Credit: WFP photo archives

“We need to use this temporary relief from the worst of the crisis to focus our efforts on life-saving assistance, while building up people’s ability to cope with future drought – and thereby reduce their dependence on aid. Recovery is only possible after the next harvests in August if the rains are good and other external factors, such as conflict, do not hamper the progress made so far.”

placed.

“We need to use this temporary relief from the worst of the crisis to focus our efforts on life-saving assistance, while building up people’s ability to cope with future drought and thereby reduce their dependence on aid,” said Mr. Bowden. “Recovery is only possible after the next harvests in August if the rains are good and other external factors, such as conflict, do not hamper the progress made so far.”

Access remains the biggest challenge for the humanitarian community in Somalia. “We rely substantially on the humanity of all parties to the conflict to demonstrate their continuous commitment to the Somali people. All actors have a responsibility to respect international humanitarian law and grant unconditional access to vulnerable people. Similarly, all parties must minimize the impact of conflict on civilians,” Mr. Bowden added. ■

TFG moves to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers

By Ketevan Gagnidze, Child Protection Advisor, UNPOS

Following the announcement in January that it would introduce new strict measures to put a stop to the recruitment and use of child soldiers, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) held a workshop to establish concrete safeguards to protect children and prevent their involvement in armed conflict.

Supported by UNPOS, UNICEF and the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, the workshop focused on four key areas: 1) measures to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers, 2) means to identify and release child soldiers, 3) ways to reintegrate them into their families and communities and 4), strengthening the legal framework to criminalize child recruitment and promote child protection.

In Somalia, the TFG has been cited by the UN alongside Al Shabaab and the Hizbul Islam group for the recruitment and use of children so this move reflects significant progress in advancing the children in armed conflict agenda in Somalia.

It also puts into action the pledge made in November 2011 by the TFG to Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict. During her visit, Ms. Coomaraswamy secured the commitment of the President and Prime Minister of Somalia to enter a process to end the recruitment and use of children by the TFG. She also secured the TFG commitment to release Al Shabaab child recruits defectors from detention camps and move them to a child-only space or reintegrate them with their families.

Since the World Summit for Children in 1990, the United Nations has increasingly sought to draw international attention to the plight of children affected by armed conflict. In Somalia, the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting on six grave violations of children rights was established and became operational in April 2011 under the co-chairmanship of the UNPOS and UNICEF. The monitoring and reporting is a shared task which involves the whole UN system and it aims to provide credible information, analysis and reporting on the situation of

children affected by armed conflict in Somalia. The analysis presented in the report is based on cases of grave violations of children's rights as documented by a network of United Nations and child protection partners on the ground. It also defines measures and actions taken for protection of children and as well as mechanisms established for further prevention of abuses of child rights over the reporting period.

The UN Country Task Force reporting will also make up an integral part of the UN Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict which he presents to the UN Security Council every year. This report provides an account of the violations of children's rights

encounter numerous challenges. The absence of key structural and institutional mechanisms such as a vetting procedure to determine the age of army recruits leaves room for ongoing violations. Without proper vetting and age verification mechanisms, underage recruits may still exist amongst the ranks of the Somali National Armed Forces.

The United Nations is currently supporting the process of drafting an Action Plan on the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. Another significant step to advance the process was the appointment of high-level focal point officers from the TFG to work with the United Nations to



Child Soldiers. Credit: UNICEF

across the globe and includes the 'naming and shaming' list which specifies state and non-state parties who commit grave violations against children including naming the parties to the conflicts that recruit and use children as soldiers.

The TFG has taken steps address child rights violations in general and specifically to combat child recruitment and use in order to be delisted from this list, including calling for investigations into the presence of children in the TFG armed forces and adopting an official policy against the recruitment of any person under the age of 18 in its armed forces.

Nevertheless, the practical implementation of these commitments continues to

work on the plan and to address the recruitment and use of children as soldiers.

The UN, and specifically UNICEF, also supports the programmes that promote rehabilitation of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups through counseling, back-to-school initiatives, skills-based training and family reunification.

There is a long way to go and much needs to be done. There is a wise African saying that "if you want to walk fast you walk alone, but if you want walk far your walk together." We must all walk along towards the goal of better, safer and brighter future of all Somali children. ■

Leadership learns to delegate at Garowe Conferences

By Omar Aden Qadi, Civic Education & Media Officer,
UNDP/UNPOS Joint Constitution Unit



Delegates participate in the Garowe conference

Most major conferences on Somalia are held in Nairobi – or in recent months, in Mogadishu. So there was great excitement when it was announced that two major meetings on the country's future Constitution would be held in the town of Garowe in the Somali State of Puntland. Following the signing of the Roadmap to the end of transition, Roadmap signatories and members of civil society met to deliberate principles in two consultative Constitutional Conferences, now known as Garowe I and II.

In preparation, Garowe was given a facelift. The public, businesses and civil society worked together: the town was cleaned up, streets were lit and thousands of troops relocated from the rest of Puntland to ensure security.

At the start of the Garowe I, held in December 2011, thousands of people lined the sides of the road from the air strip to the President's Palace waving branches and flowers to welcome delegations from all over Somalia. The impressive show of hospitality set the stage for the positive atmosphere of the conference.

Garowe I examined two main issues. First, participants concentrated on how the new Constitution would be adopted. It was agreed that the draft constitution was to be indirectly approved by a tem-

porary consultative body, the National Constituent Assembly (NCA). Second, the conference laid out the composition and structure of the new Parliament, Somalia's legislative body. It was agreed to be bicameral, represented in the division between the upper and lower houses.

The agreement issued at the close of Garowe I, known as Garowe Principles, provides guidance and direction in the finalization of both the Constitution and the end of the transition. Its important to note that most of the Garowe Principles were based on negotiations done by working groups comprised of the delegations rather than a 'top down' approach. Civil society organizations, including women's organizations played an important role in those working groups. The leadership should be recognized for delegating negotiations on such important issues.

While the Garowe II conference, held in February 2012, followed in the footsteps of Garowe I and adopted the same style of negotiations, civil society representation was stronger – both in numbers and in the influence they had on the agreements.

Garowe II focused on three main issues beginning with the adoption of Federalism as the system of government. It was agreed that sovereignty will be constitutionally divided between a central gov-

erning authority and constituent political states and provinces. Holding an important national conference in Garowe also sent an important message regarding Federalism in the new Somalia: a signal that authorities would be dispersed throughout the country for a more broadly representative and locally accountable governance.

The conference also elaborated on the details of the structure, function and membership of the Parliamentary and Electoral systems. The influence of civil society could be seen in many key agreements, most notably in the decision that women should make up 30 percent of all branches of the government, including Parliament and the Executive. Finally, participants focused on 'operationalizing' the process, essentially taking all the necessary steps to implement, the principles agreed upon in Garowe I.

The Garowe process continues. The Roadmap implementation measures that must be put in place prior to the August transition will move forward, benchmarks must be met and building on the Transitional Federal Charter, the Kampala Accord, the Roadmap, Garowe I and Garowe II principles, plans to finalize the draft constitution are in place for 20 April 2012. The formation of the relevant agreed-upon governmental bodies will proceed and the process will have formed. ■

Somali Womens' efforts pay off at last

By Charity Buga, Associate Gender Affairs Officer, UNPOS



Minister Maryam Awais Jama of MOWDAFA and TFG Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Honorable Hussein Arab Isse, at the closing of the three-day workshop

For years, Somali women have demonstrated their critical role in society. Despite the predominantly patriarchal society in Somalia, women's strong role resonates throughout the Somali social structure. While they have borne the brunt of war, been disproportionately impacted through displacement, family burdens and gross violations of their rights, Somali women have also shown extraordinary resilience and are the backbone of Somali society. In addition to their traditional caregiver roles, they have played a key part fending for their households and communities. Legitimizing the role of women in the political process and in political decision-making is imperative.

Over the years, Somali women have lobbied for quotas for official representation and active engagement in the political structures and the peace processes. While promises were made, they failed to translate into real, quantifiable progress. Under the Transitional Federal Charter in 2004, it was agreed 12 per cent of the representatives would be women: the initial 225-member parliament included only 18 women, representing just eight per cent. When the parliament later expanded to 550 members there were only 22 female

members – a dismal four per cent of the total. A sustainable peace requires the involvement of a critical mass of women, which is why the UN and the international community have invested heavily in empowering women to play their role in the political process and peace building initiatives.

To this end, UNPOS Gender Unit in partnership with the Ministry of Women Development and Family Care (MOWDAFA) provided a platform for Somali women to add their voice and views on the implementation of the Roadmap. The Garowe II Roadmap Conference, with the endorsement of an unprecedented requirement that women hold a minimum 30 per cent of the seats in all the new bodies of government – the Interim Independent Electoral Commission, Constituent Assembly and the National Federal Parliament – is a real sea change for Somali women.

Two consultative meetings aimed at seeking women's views on the key issues of representation, security, constitution and outreach were held with 77 representatives of Somali women's organizations from Mogadishu, Galmadug, Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ), Puntland and the In-

dependent Federal Constitution Commission (IFCC) in November and December 2011, in Nairobi and Mogadishu respectively.

"Somali women must arise, put aside all divisive elements such as clan differences to fully participate and effectively contribute to all efforts aimed at bringing lasting peace to Somalia," said Ms. Luul Abdi Adan, the Deputy Minister of MOWDAFA. The workshop ended with the TFG Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Honorable Hussein Arab Isse, assuring the TFG's commitment to promoting women's participation in the implementation of the Roadmap and particularly in the various committees and commissions to be established.

Though this momentous achievement has given the Somali women a reason to smile, the moment to celebrate is yet to come as the real challenges and tasks remain ahead: ensuring the 30 per cent representation is met through mobilization, a carefully managed selection process and capacity building.

This is ultimately the moment for which all Somali women have been waiting. We call on all partners to support them in realizing this dream. ■

SG visits Mogadishu

On 9 December 2011, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon paid an unannounced visit to the Somali capital Mogadishu together with the President of the UN General Assembly, Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser.

This was the first time that a Secretary-General and UN General Assembly President had visited Somalia together, and the first visit by a UN chief in nearly two decades. The two men met with President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed and other leaders to discuss the way ahead and how the international community can help Somalia.

“We have come here to see for [ourselves] the changes underway and show the strong solidarity of the United Nations and the broader international community,” Mr. Ban said at a press conference in Mogadishu. “I believe we are at a critical juncture – a moment of fresh opportunities for the future of [the] Somali people,” he added.

The Secretary-General emphasized the need to move ahead quickly on the political front with the Roadmap on ending the transition that was agreed in September 2011. To further these efforts, he announced the relocation of UNPOS from Nairobi to Mogadishu which followed a month later in January 2012.

On his way back to Nairobi from Mogadishu, the Secretary-

General visited the Dadaab refugee camp, which hosts the largest number of Somali refugees. He met with refugees and elders in the camp, as well as UN staff working to assist the refugees, during what he described as a “humbling and very sad” visit. ■



Secretary General Ban-ki Moon in Mogadishu, Somalia

Update on the Joint Security Committee

By Ismini Palla, Public Information Officer, UNPOS

Recent security developments and key issues from police, military and justice and corrections sectors dominated the two-day discussions during the 12th session of the Joint Security Committee in Mogadishu between 12 and 13 March.

The meeting was co-chaired by TFG Prime Minister, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Somalia, Augustine Mahiga, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC), Boubacar Diarra, and by representative of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Patrick Nabiswa. Delegates from Galmudug, Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a as well as the Mayor of Mogadishu were also present. The international community was represented by USA, UK, EU, Italy, Japan and Norway and Denmark among others.

Addressing the meeting Ambassador Mahiga stressed the critical point of the process. “The Somali people and the in-

ternational community expect significant and demonstrable progress,” the UN envoy said, adding that only five months are left before August and that the Parliamentary impasse must be resolved.

The delegates discussed in depth the integration of forces allied to the TFG into the Somali National Forces and reiterated the fact that there must be a very clear command and control structure in order to sustain them properly.

The establishment of security arrangements in the newly recovered areas was further emphasized as was the need to be aligned with a political strategy.

For the first time the meeting also touched on the issue of disengaging former combatants and the necessity to deliver an appropriate disarmament programme, as the military operations are advancing and more territory is recovered.

Attention was given as well to the need to develop an appropriate pension programme for injured and disabled veterans

and families of deceased members of the Somali forces.

The Committee further noted that the National Security and Stabilisation Plan needs to be adopted urgently and its time specific tasks to be implemented within the Roadmap deadline.

Prime Minister Abdiweli reiterated the requirement to support the Somali Army and Police forces as a vital step towards the realization of complete order in the country. “They need the necessary support that will allow them to defeat Al Shabaab,” he stated.

The representatives also noted the Justice and Corrections institutions should be strengthened in parallel with the Police and Military within the wider efforts towards promoting the rule of law and security in Somalia.

Finally, the Committee welcomed the drawing up of an action plan, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1612, to prevent child soldiering. ■

Round up: International Meetings



ICG Meeting in Djibouti

Two important international meetings on Somalia took place in February. From 5-6 February the **International Contact Group (ICG)** in Djibouti brought together senior representatives of the Government (including the Prime Minister), Parliament, Puntland, Galmudug and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a together with forty foreign governments and international organisations under the chairmanship of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Dr. Augustine Mahiga.

The meeting focused on three main areas. With regard to the political process, there was unanimity among participants that the Transition must come to an end on 20 August. For that to happen, everyone agreed that Somalia needs to adopt a new Constitution, to establish a new, smaller and more representative Parliament and to hold elections for the positions of Speaker, Deputies and President. Broad support for the Garowe Principles was combined with a call to broaden consultations with civil society so that future decisions could enjoy the widest possible popular support. The ICG expressed its strong concern over recent action by some Members of Parliament to attempt to replace the Speaker, and warned of possible sanctions against so-called "spoilers". With regard to the security situation, the Group welcomed recent military successes by AMISOM, TFG forces and their partners against Al Shabaab. The priority now was to establish functional local administrations and stabilization programmes in those newly-liberated areas. Turning to reconstruction

Fifty-five delegations from Somalia (including the President, Prime Minister and Speaker) and the wider international community (including several Heads of State/Government and international organizations) met in London on 23 February. The detailed Communiqué listed a wide range of agreements in seven areas. On the political process, participants once again stressed that the mandate of the Transitional Federal Institutions must end in August; there should be action to incentivize progress and punish spoilers; the Communiqué welcomed the establishment of a Joint Financial Management Board; and called for greater respect for human rights.

and recovery, the ICG encouraged the Roadmap signatories to develop a detailed plan for discussion in Istanbul later this year concerning ways to improve access to basic services, education, employment, infrastructure and incentives for peace.

Fifty-five delegations from Somalia (including the President, Prime Minister and Speaker) and the wider international community (including several Heads of State/Government and international organizations) met in **London** on 23 February. The detailed Communiqué listed a wide range of agreements in seven areas. On the political process, participants once again stressed that the mandate of the Transitional Federal Institutions must end in August; there should be action to incentivize progress and punish spoilers; the Communiqué welcomed the establishment of a Joint Financial Management Board; and called for greater respect for human rights. Under security, the meeting welcomed the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2036, which expands AMISOM's mandate and raises the troop ceiling. The London Conference reiterated its determination to eradicate piracy, noting that the problem requires a comprehensive approach on land as well as sea. Participants agreed to build capacity in the region to disrupt terrorism. A number of countries announced that they had decided to contribute towards the creation of a new Stability Fund, to help build support for legitimate local authorities and improve services for people living there. Turning to humanitarian issues, participants agreed to link relief with longer-term recovery. And, finally, welcoming the relocation of UNPOS to Mogadishu, the meeting agreed that everyone would aim to spend more time on the ground in Somalia.

Coming up on the international agenda in June is the **Istanbul II Conference**, which follows up from the first Conference in May 2010. The first Conference focused on reconstruction and development and highlighted the important nexus between the state and the business community. The Conference encouraged focus on six initial priority areas identified by the Transitional Federal Government and the business community: telecommunications; transport infrastructure; livestock exports; fisheries, banking and remittances; and alternative energy. ■

DDR for a stable and durable peace in Somalia

By Ismini Palla, Public Information Officer, UNPOS



Ex-Combatants camp in Mogadishu. Credit: UNDSS

Mogadishu, 18 March 2012 – Demobilizing, disarming and re-integrating (DDR) former combatants will be integral to establishing a stable and durable peace in Somalia. The key players in DDR including the TFG, and local authorities, AMISOM, UN agencies and NGOs, met and held the first two-day workshop to determine approaches, roles and procedures for managing disengaged combatants in Mogadishu from 17-18 March.

The workshop was organized and facilitated by the UN Political Office for Somalia and chaired by the Deputy Minister of Interior and National Security, Abdihakim E. Guled. Participants included the Deputy Mayor, Iman Icar, AU DSRCC Wafula Wamunyinyi, senior TFG and AMISOM officials, representatives from Galmudug, civil society, UN agencies, NGOs and the international community.

“Managing the disengaged combatants

is a complex issue that requires sound coordination and cooperation. It calls for cohesive and comprehensive approaches and strategies,” said the UN Special Representative for Somalia, Dr. Augustine Mahiga, in a statement read out on his behalf. “We need to support the Government, IGAD and AMISOM to manage the disengaged combatants that have decided to join the peace process,” he added.

Currently there is only one camp in Mogadishu managing ex-combatants and two rehabilitation centres for some 500 youth.

The definition of disengaged combatant, the legal framework as well as policies and standard operation procedures were debated while as were special cases of detainees as well as conditions of amnesty guarantees.

The group further focused on special requirements for children and families noting that family reunification mecha-

nisms and proper psychosocial support should be provided to the affected youth. Prevention measures are equally important to prevent young people joining the insurgents. “This is the opportunity to support our youth and guarantee peace and stability for Somalia,” said Minister Guled.

The workshop called for an integrated inclusive approach on the issue involving all key Ministries, regional local administrators, Human Rights Officers, Legal Advisors, NGOs, UN agencies, AMISOM, IGAD, local community and international expertise where monitoring and oversight mechanisms are included.

The participants emphasized that this should be a national driven process and they reconfirmed the need to establish a Technical Support Secretariat on the issue of disengaged fighters to meet on a regular basis and report to the Inter-ministerial Committee. ■



Mayor Mohamud Ahmed Nur greets children at the opening of a new Market



Funeral of former President, Abdullahi Yusuf. Credit: Stuart Price AU/UN IST



Mourners gather to pay their respects. Credit: Stuart Price AU/UN IST





Somali president Sharif Ahmed opens new TFG Training Camp in Mogadishu. Credit: Anthony Hunt AU/UN IST



British Foreign Secretary William Hague (left) visit to Somalia. Credit: Stuart Price AU/UN IST

Celebrating the first international flight from Turkey.
Credit: Stuart Price AU/UN IST

