



## United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

### **Letter to the members of the Somali Diaspora (No. 23)**

Nairobi, 11 March 2010

As-Salaamu Alaikum,

My warmest greetings to you all,

1. The news from your home country is often a mixed bag but as always I would rather look on the positive side – never or rarely reported - and see how we can push forward. I will leave it to others to report on the negative. They will not miss any.

2. The Government continues to make important efforts to reach out to groups and individuals interested in peace, stability and the return of dignity to Somalia. I have always said that ultimately there can only be a political solution to the situation in Somalia. The latest example: the work towards an agreement with Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a is important for several reasons. This is a patriotic group which is well respected for its religious outlook. At the same time it has shown it is serious about working for traditional Moslem and Somali values. We hope this agreement is just a first step and will become a blueprint for other groups to come into the Government and work together. It is never late to do good things. In addition it is in the framework of the Djibouti Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding sponsored by UNPOS between the two parties last June.

3. Meanwhile, important work is continuing on the Constitution. A workshop is underway in Djibouti for members of the Independent Federal Constitution Commission which is tasked with drawing up the new Constitution. In order to finish the draft by June this year, they have agreed to ensure it is a strong, clear, concise document. There is no need, at this stage, to go into the minutiae of trade or family law for example. This Constitution will help your country through the elections next year. The new international team in charge of the Constitution seems determined to bring change to a process already seen as taking too long.

4. To be honest, I have been disappointed by the continued bickering in Mogadishu, particularly with regard to the Parliamentarians. I applaud their bravery for working in the capital and know that they do not receive their salaries as they should. Still my opinion is that they should behave as statesmen rather than working to undermine each other and their country's leadership. Such actions only help those who want to topple them and keep the country in a state of anarchy and disrespect as a consequence. I call on Parliamentarians to remain focus on peace and to be patient. We all care for them and continue to fight for a lasting solution to their problems.

5. On the security front, training is continuing for the Government police and troops and many of your friends are working to ensure that they will also be paid regularly. They are undertaking tough work and are often exposed to unjust attacks. They and their leadership deserve our support and patience. The new Army Chief of Staff deserves your support and the backing of all true friends of Somalia

6. I continue to be impressed by the progress being made in the field of the media. New comers are adding their views and voices. Radio Mogadishu and others are getting a wide listenership despite the continued threats from the extremists. I understand even those of you outside the country have access to Radio Mogadishu through satellite and the internet. The media war is an extremely important front and we should all encourage the Government and ordinary Somalis to get their message out in as many ways as it can and not be drowned out by the propaganda from others. I am also encouraging the international community to step in and help on this issue where a little money can have a wide reaching impact. This message is getting positive responses.

7. President Sharif is in London this week to meet the Prime Minister Gordon Brown and other Ministers as well as Diaspora members. I consider this an important sign of the UK's continued engagement with Somalia and the place given to those of you living there. For a President to be the friend of a Permanent Member of the Security Council is always helpful. The fact that you have a Government, whatever your views of its composition and actions, allows the international community to engage with you on an equal footing. Moreover it prepares your country to keep moving away from the shameful status of a *"failed state"*.

8. We are hoping, on this subject, to hold a Conference on Reconstruction and Development later before the middle of the year. This will once again focus the attention of the world on Somalia not as a *"failed state"*, but only as a *"fragile state"* like many developing countries that needs building up. I will bring you more details as soon as we have them.

9. In most if not all civil wars, state and non state actors do often interfere in the affected country. We all have to live with this fact of life. However it seems that due to the length of the crisis in your country, foreign meddling has reached an exceptional level. Worse, this meddling seems senseless and anarchic, as if there is no strategy behind it. Some meddle only to demonstrate that what they represent is important. Others do it as a hobby and do not even realize the impact of their acts. Still others meddle to cover up illegal undertakings. Indeed it is up to all of you to help end this situation by uniting and strengthening your acts. In the Jaalidat you can play a lead patriotic role in their area. Patience, compromise and patriotic action will help:

*"That is because Allah will never change the grace which He hath bestowed on a people, until they change their own condition....."*

Sura 8 V 53

11. In the past week or so Canada and the UK have joined other countries including the US by putting the extremist Al Shabab on their terrorist lists. While this is intended to meet national objectives known to Canada and the UK, this measure will also make life more difficult for those of you living peacefully in these countries. They will be unnecessarily under the spotlight.

Yours Faithfully,  
Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah