



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

Letter to the members of the Somali Diaspora (No. 27)

Nairobi, 12 August 2010

Dear Friends,

My warmest greetings to you all. I am pleased to be sending my first letter to you since I assumed office as the new UN Special Representative for Somalia a month ago. I look forward to a fruitful and engaging relationship with all of you. My predecessor, Mr Ould-Abdallah particularly emphasized to me the importance of the Diaspora in supporting all the various aspects of the work we do, particularly in implementing the Djibouti Agreement. I have been struck by the remarkable concern and engagement of the Somali Diaspora with the unfortunate developments at home in Somalia.

Let me say that I am delighted to be back in the region and to put to good use my past experience in Government and at the United Nations. I have been following the events in the region and Somalia very closely, particularly since the formation of the International Contact Group in 2006. Tanzania was a founder member of the Group as a Non-Permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2005 and 2006 I represented Tanzania in the Group until my appointment as SRSG.

I would like you to know from the start that my key priorities for Somalia are reconciliation which rests on dialogue, political inclusiveness, public security, humanitarian action and reconstruction. These priorities are mutually reinforcing. My office continues to support and encourage the Transitional Federal Government on this path, and to fulfilling its priority tasks before the end of its mandate in August 2011.

The recent devastating attacks in Uganda on 11 July 2010 were an illustration of new challenges ahead. On behalf of the UN, once again, I wish to express my sincere condolences to the families of the innocent victims and to all Ugandans for having had their basic sense of security threatened. The attacks show that the effect of the crisis in Somalia is spreading beyond its borders and further confirms the regional and international ramifications of the conflict.



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Somalia had already been an important item on the agendas of regional and international organizations. The current political and security impasse demands urgent action. This is evident from the decisions of the IGAD Summit held on 5 July 2010 in Addis Ababa, as well as those of the 15th Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Kampala from 19-27 July 2010. The decisions call for urgency and decisiveness in addressing the Somali crisis.

A number of meetings were held on the margins of the AU Assembly to consider further actions on assisting Somalia towards lasting peace and stability. I am pleased to say that support and goodwill towards Somalia remain high despite the sometimes seemingly desperate situation. The Kampala tragedy has heightened international attention and concern.

The last month has also seen important progress made towards drawing up a Constitution, one of the key transitional tasks of the TFG. An official launch of the Consultation Draft Constitution will take place soon. This will begin the process of civic education and public consultations to the extent possible in which Somalis, inside and outside the country, will be encouraged to make comments on the draft. The first Draft Constitution is expected to be completed by the end of this year. This will be a unique opportunity for Somalis to shape their destiny.

I am pleased to report that the Joint Security Committee (JSC), which is the primary coordination body for security sector reform, met over the weekend under the co-chairmanship of Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke and myself. The meeting, which was attended by several Somali ministers as well as representatives of the international community, came up with several recommendations for making concrete progress, including support to the Somali Security Forces, Police and the Security Ministries.

While the security situation is currently creating the most concern, I would like to emphasize that building public institutions and creating conditions for the delivery of basic services to the Somali people must be high priority areas. There can be no doubt that areas such as education, health, water and sanitation remain critical to the Somali people in their daily well being. The Diaspora can contribute immensely in improving the situation in these areas. I commend with admiration your demonstrated sense of compassion, patriotism and duty in your phenomenal annual transfers of financial resources to your kith and kin at home. I encourage you to actively exercise every effort in the same spirit in assisting the authorities to improve the situation in providing the necessary services to the people.



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Equally important is the obligation of every Somali to remain committed to peace and reconciliation in your country. Somalis have, through the Djibouti Peace Agreement, shown that they are capable of working through their differences. Your culture of accommodating each other, moderation and consensus building should prevail at this time

I remain committed to the attainment of the goal of peace and security in Somalia and I shall continue from where my predecessor left off to mobilize and increase international support for Somalia. In partnership with all those who support the peace process, you in the Diaspora, can ensure that the existing prospects for peace are harnessed into tangible outcomes—better security and improved conditions for the long suffering Somali people. Every opportunity offered by those who support the peace process should be seized to return Somalia to its rightful place among the community of nations. I believe that the Somali Diaspora is, and always will be, an indispensable stakeholder in this undertaking.

Finally, I wish to take the opportunity to say Ramadam Karim to you and your loved ones.

Warm regards,
Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga