

**Permanent Observer Mission of the
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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

MEETING ON THE ITEM

“THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA”

STATEMENT

BY

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COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY
AFRICAN UNION**

NEW YORK, 23 JULY 2008

Mr. President:

It is a great honour and privilege for me to address this august Council regarding Somalia, and I wish to commend your initiative to organize this meeting, which we believe, goes to boost the renewed momentum we are witnessing in the mobilization of world attention. Allow me also to re-state our deep appreciation to the Secretary General of the United Nations for his commitment and support, and to commend his Special Representative, our colleague and brother, Ould Abdallah, for his relentless efforts on the ground. The presence in the Council today of an integrated Somali delegation led by the Foreign Minister of the Transitional Federal Government, and including some distinguished leaders of the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia is a very positive and strong indicator of their willingness to work towards the restoration of lasting peace and reconciliation in their country. It is also a clear message which should reassure the Security Council and international community that Somalia is ready to receive and to lend its full cooperation to a UN peacekeeping mission. We urge the Council to take full cognizance of the implications of this act of unity for peace and security in Somalia, and for the region as a whole.

Mr. President:

1. We note, with satisfaction, the growing mobilization regarding the situation in Somalia as recognition of the window of opportunity created following the progress made by the Somalis themselves, particularly the efforts of the Transitional Federal Government and other stakeholders towards the stabilization of the situation in their country, and in furtherance of dialogue and reconciliation among all Somalis.
2. These efforts culminated, first, in the convening of the National Reconciliation Congress (NRC) in the months of July and August 2007, which made a number of recommendations aimed at promoting an all-inclusive political process. This was further reinforced by the efforts of the Special Representative Ould Abdallah and supported by the African Union, through the convening of the Inter-Somalia Talks, which resulted in the Djibouti Agreement on 9 June 2008, between the Transitional Federal Government and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia.

3. As you are aware, during its meeting held at the level of Heads of State and Government on the margins of last Summit of the African Union held in Sharm El Shiekh, Egypt, the Peace and Security Council welcomed the new prospects for lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia, and called for support and cooperation for the implementation of the Djibouti Agreement. We are pleased to note that other leaders and components of the opposition are recognizing and joining the Agreement as a viable means towards finding a lasting solution to their differences. The Agreement provides for the establishment of two key Committees – the Joint Security Committee and the High Level Committee to prepare for the consolidation of both the ongoing political process and improving considerably the security situation in the country. The implementation of this provision is currently underway, and the African Union is actively collaborating with the United Nations in implementing it as well as other important elements of the Agreement.

Mr. President:

4. I would like to underscore the fact the resolve of the Somali Parties to commit themselves to key proposals, including the restoration of mutual trust and confidence, with the objective of ending the conflict, provides the appropriate vista through which the international community particularly, the United Nations and the African Union, can further assist in the peace process. The African Union, which is currently on the ground through its Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and other good offices of the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission, is prepared to use all necessary means within its capability to assist the parties, in collaboration with the United Nations and other members of the international community towards an effective cessation of hostilities on the field.

Mr. President:

5. Despite all sacrifices of its leaders and elements, AMISOM is unable to fulfill its mandate because its strength is obviously grossly incommensurate to the scope of real challenges on the ground. The mission faces severe lack of funding and logistic support. Using UN one-year standard estimates, its budget, amounts to US\$817,500.00, covering the logistics, financial and technical components. It is crucial to beef-up the mission to reach its authorized strength of 8000 troops, from the current level of 2600, which constitutes only about 30% of the total. In this regard, the African Union is

embarking on a new troop generation exercise amongst its members, and I wish to take this opportunity to resound our deep appreciation to the governments of Burundi and Uganda for their continued commitment to the realization of lasting peace and reconciliation amongst all Somalis. I wish, also, to reiterate the request of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union for assistance, for the mission. While acknowledging the response of the Secretary General to this request, I should like to reiterate our call for greater support for AMISOM from all other partners.

Mr. President

6. I wish, at this juncture, to draw that attention of the Security Council to the developments on the grounds, which provide an unprecedented window of opportunity in the past 18 years. I therefore wish to renew the previous calls of the African Union for a UN take-over of the AMISOM, which is also reflected in the clear wish expressed by the Somalis themselves in the Djibouti Agreement, in order to achieve an accelerated end to the on-going hostilities. In any case, AMISOM stands in readiness to be ultimately included in the International Stabilization Force provided for in the Djibouti Agreement.

7. In my interaction with the Council during its visit to Djibouti, I had the opportunity to suggest, for further consideration, the need for a strong naval component in the design of a Concept of Operations for the UN peacekeeping mission for Somalia, particularly at the early stages of the Mission. This suggestion is informed by experience on the ground thus far. A mission with a strong naval component would allow for its focus to extend beyond the capital city of Mogadishu, to include the maintenance of lasting peace and security for the rest of the country and people of Somalia. This would also contribute to efforts for the implementation of the arms embargo, strengthen security for humanitarian efforts through improved security at coastal entry-port areas, enhance the protection of resources in the territorial sea of Somalia and also help prevent the dumping of waste in its waters. A mission with a strong naval component would also be a significant safeguard against ground attacks on the mission, and thus enhance the security of both mission personnel and equipment. Improved security at the maritime borders of Somalia would in turn spread a positive multiplier effect inwards to the rest of the country. This would be one way through which the security process would impact the political and humanitarian efforts, as has been

recommended by Special Representative Ould Abdallah, with whom I fully share the focus on the need for the international community to act decisively, and to act now.

Notwithstanding the difficult history of UN past involvement in Somalia, we call on the Security Council to crown its consideration of the situation at this crucial stage with a resolution, enabling the United Nations and international community to deploy a robust mission, and thus fully seize the current unique window of opportunity for the restoration of lasting peace and security in the country. We are all aware that any unnecessary delays may allow room for spoilers to undermine our efforts, and turn the auspicious occasion to build a better future for Somalia and the region into a lost opportunity. We must not allow that to happen.

I thank you.