

Dialogue and cooperation is essential for a peaceful and lasting Somalia

Thank you Mr President, and I also want to thank our briefers. I thought Dan Smith's presentation was particularly interesting. I think it's a helpful reminder that it is rarely the case and certainly not in Somalia, that all of a country's problems can be fixed through a sort of top-down political process in smoke filled rooms in the capital city. And that actually a bottom-up, community-based wider contextual understanding is important. I thought your point around the need for this Council, as it thinks about conflict prevention, which is something that we struggle with sometimes, to be thinking about climate risk as part of that and the data input was really an important one as well and I hope we can take that forward collectively.

Mr President, let me start with one of the most positive elements recently and congratulate the Government of Somalia on reaching the major milestone of eligibility for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country initiative. And let me commend the cooperation between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States on the financial reforms which have enabled this. It's vital now that that cooperation between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States deepens and extends to political and security reform, which will allow Somalia to fulfil the criteria necessary for debt relief.

Let me also welcome the recent enactment of the Electoral Law, which President Farmajo noted was a and I quote, "A chance to execute democratic rights for one person, one vote in the forthcoming 2021 elections". But this is only the first step. They are essential aspects of the elections which are still unresolved. And we are concerned about spoilers trying to push the process off track. So it is vital, Mr President, that the Somali parliament takes urgent steps to make progress on the passage of the Amendments to the Political Parties Act, which will allow parties to register for the elections and to address other unresolved questions in the electoral law, including; the definition of constituencies, the allocation of seats to constituencies, how the 30% quota of seats for women to which Somalia has committed will be implemented and management of seats in Benadir and Somaliland. These questions need to be answered in order to make the electoral law technically implementable and fundable. If we are to deliver peaceful, inclusive, credible and transparent one person, one vote elections in line with the provisional constitution of Somalia.

Mr President, we regret that their National Independent Election Commission (NIEC) is unable to operate freely in all Federal Member States. NIEC is an independent and impartial technical body empowered by the Constitution, and we call on Somali authorities at all levels to cooperate fully with NIEC to meet the registration of political parties and to take steps to ensure media freedoms.

Now, Mr President, if that is an example of one of the problems currently

facing us in Somalia, we believe that the resolution comes principally through dialogue and cooperation between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States. It is simply essential to a peaceful and agreed process for the transition of power. Elections are a crucial step towards a political settlement in Somalia and a broader constitutional review. And so we call on the Federal Government and the Federal Member States to engage constructively and urgently in consensus building to agree how the electoral model will be implemented.

Mr President, to ensure broader stability in Somalia, we urge all stakeholders in Galmudug State to engage in dialogue on local reconciliation, to preserve the significant efforts and progress of the last seven months. We are concerned that a divided Galmudug with multiple claims to leadership will be harder to govern, and compromise must be made to avoid the risk of instability and conflict. We also urge all parties in Jubaland to ease tensions and address differences through dialogue and compromise.

Now Mr President, let me turn to security and security reforms. We are at a critical juncture in discussions on a long term future of international support to Somali security and how we support Somalia in taking the lead. This Council mandated an independent review of Somali security after 2021, and we urge regional partners to engage in consultations with Somalia, with the United Nations, with the African Union to help deliver a joint and unified solution for a post-2021 security model in Somalia. Rapid progress on security reforms is vital, including commitment to delivery of a Somali-led transition plan and the implementation of a National Security Architecture. And it is crucial that the drawdown of AMISOM troops this month happens in line with the threat assessment on the ground. Last time round, this approach wasn't taken and it had a negative impact, so better consultation is important.

We remain concerned by the ongoing climate and conflict-induced humanitarian crisis. The current desert locust crisis in Somalia and the wider region is extremely worrying and the United Kingdom is coordinating closely with partners to limit the locust infestation and mitigate the impact of crop losses through surveillance and spraying operations. We call on the international community to provide more funding for the humanitarian response and to step up efforts to build resilience and long-term climate indications initiatives in Somalia. And I would just note, in the last 12 months, the UK has given over \$400 million to the various humanitarian, political and security requirements in Somalia.

Finally, let me pay tribute to the United Nations for its continued support under the SRSG to Somalia. We pay tribute to the ongoing commitment and sacrifices of AMISOM troop contributing countries and of course, of the Somali National Security Forces in the fight against Al-Shabaab. They are brave and tenacious men and women who are fighting for not only Somali security, but for the region and for all of us.

Somalia and its international supporters face a huge task in the coming years in delivering inclusive national elections and a transition to Somalia-led security. The UK will continue to stand firmly alongside Somalia, the United

Nations, the African Union in these efforts, but without substantial progress, both on elections and on consensus building between the different levels of government, there is a risk that our next discussion of Somalia will be a much more difficult discussion. So let's do everything we can to prevent that from happening.

Thank you.