

Joint statement on announcement of date for Somaliland's parliamentary and local council elections

The below statement was signed by Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States.

The international partners supporting Somaliland's democratisation process welcome the announcement that parliamentary and local council elections will take place on 31 May 2021.

These elections present a significant opportunity for Somaliland to reaffirm its democratic credentials and to further the progress that has been realised in Somaliland's democratisation process since the last parliamentary election in 2005.

We commend the National Electoral Commission and the three political parties for the successful completion of a transparent and inclusive voter registration between December 2020 and January 2021. We observed and welcomed the large numbers of young men and women across Somaliland registering to vote for the first time. It is the sustained transparency, independence and impartiality of these technical processes, and the institutions supporting them, which underpins the credibility of Somaliland's democratic processes.

We encourage the government and the political parties to continue to ensure that candidates at all levels not only have the personal qualities to carry out the role required of them but that they are also truly representative of Somaliland's internal diversity. We welcome the 3 September 2020 commitment signed by the three political parties to collectively "nominate 18 women candidates" and "three candidates from the minority clans" for the parliamentary elections. We call on all parties to extend this commitment to the local council elections and to take further steps to ensure greater political representation of women, youth and minority clans after the May elections.

We look forward to the agreement of electoral Codes of Conduct for political parties and the media. We hope both agreements will reflect a commitment to inclusivity in addition to underlining the importance of transparency on candidate nomination, an equal playing field for campaigning, prevention of intimidation or harassment, including safety of women candidates, equal access to the media and a commitment to press freedom.

We remain committed to work with Somaliland to support the delivery of transparent, secure, credible and inclusive elections on 31 May. We commend the Somaliland government for its commitment to ensuring elections are delivered on time, and to providing the majority of the funding for these elections. The international community has provided financial support to the

NEC for the voter registration phase (from EU, Sweden and UK), and we look forward to providing further financial and non-financial support for remaining stages of the election process.