

Speech by Federica Mogherini at the opening session of the 2017 London Conference on Somalia

Check against delivery!

President Mohamed Hassan Mohamed, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Somalia still needs our support, at a critical moment in its history. The EU has always been and will continue to be the first supporter of Somalia across all fields – from security to humanitarian, in full partnership with the Somali Administration, our friends in the region, the AU and the UN. The Somali people face great difficulties, after decades of instability and years of famine. And yet, hope has not abandoned this land.

With our support, I believe that there is a new opportunity for Somalia to consolidate peace, generate growth and set up a new relationship with its neighbours. It is not a distant dream, but a concrete opportunity for the very near future. The moment has arrived – in fact it begins tomorrow, the day after this conference – to find ways for the Somalis to provide for their own security. This is the precondition for peace and growth in Somalia to be sustainable in time.

It may not happen overnight, but it is in the interests of the Somali people, Somalia's neighbours and the entire international community that this happens soon. And if I look at the progress Somalia has made in recent years, particularly from Copenhagen in autumn 2014, it really shows that change is possible, and things are finally moving in the right direction.

State formation has advanced significantly, institutions are developing, and there is progress on the re-engagement with the international financial institutions. The successful indirect electoral process finalised earlier this year is an important step towards one-person one-vote elections in 2020. And the increase in female representation is a particularly encouraging sign.

There is still more work to be done to improve the rule of law and the respect of human rights, which are essential to the credibility of the institutions and the stability of any democracy. When Somalia will finalise the Constitutional review process, they will have the opportunity to consolidate the responsibilities at the federal level, and between the centre and the regions.

All this is possible also thanks to the sacrifice of so many African men and women who participated in AMISOM, together with the Somalis, to create the space for political dialogue in Somalia. The EU pays tribute to all our brothers and sisters that have paid with their life this commitment.

President Mohamad Hassan Mohamad and regional leaders have already agreed on the outlines of Somalia's federal security architecture – the National Security Architecture and the associated pact that we are endorsing today. The President's very public commitment to eliminating corruption is central to achieving success. When someone steals public Somali money, they don't only weaken Somalia's ability to be truly sovereign; they also make every Somali citizen less secure. And not only Somali citizens.

The President's visits to his neighbours in Kenya and Ethiopia were two important moments for the Horn of Africa and the broader region. Because Somalia is not an island. Its stability is a key to regional stability.

And as we talk about regional stability, we all know how important and delicate the issue of refugees is. Our public opinions and media tend to focus on the refugee crisis happening closest to us in Europe, and also elsewhere. But we must never forget that there are many refugee crises in the world. And the millions of Somalis who are displaced inside and outside their country.

The Special Summit on Somali Refugees, organised by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development in March, was an important step for refugees and their host communities. The Agreed Action Plan sets out an ambitious regional commitment, towards new ways of addressing protracted displacements. We must now translate commitments into action and quickly achieve tangible results.

Our objectives are the same. We want a Somalia reconciled with itself and with its neighbours. Al Shabaab must cease to be a threat to Somalis and their neighbours. A Somali security capacity, enshrined in the constitution, must eventually rise to providing security for all Somalis. As this occurs, AMISOM, which so far has borne the main effort to maintain security in Somalia, can progressively hand over to Somali security and police – as envisaged by the African Union's Chairman Moussa Faki.

Today's security pact sets the critical target dates for this to happen. The European Union was at the foundation of AMISOM ten years ago. And has always been there. And we intend to be with the African Union as it moves to conclude successfully its mission in Somalia. The upcoming assessment mission of AMISOM by the United Nations and the African Union should shape this process.

The European Union is ready and willing to accompany this process. But I want to be very clear; before we can make decisions about our financial support, we need to see effective coordination and burden sharing in managing this transition towards a Somali owned security system, with full participation by regional countries. We are ready and willing to be fully engaged in this process – with the Somali government and our partners in the international community, starting with the African Union.

In the weeks ahead, we will continue to work with the President of Somalia and the UN Special Representative. Through our cooperation, we want to better understand what this structure is and how it plans to engage with us all, to meet the criteria and timelines for the transition to the Somali security

structures. Again let me be very clear. Our ability to verify progress through our participation will shape our policy decisions.

In this year alone the European Union and its member states will have invested over €800 million in Somalia, which will bring our total support to €3,5 billion for the 2015-2020 period. This includes our support for AMISOM, salaries for police, development aid, and €462 million for humanitarian assistance alone, to tackle the devastating effects of the drought in Somalia. And this comes on top of our Member States' contributions channelled through the United Nations, and of our European missions and operations which have contributed and continue to contribute to making Somalia safer and stronger at sea and at land.

The European Union is by far the first donor for Somalia, in all sectors. And Today, I am glad to announce a commitment of a further €200 million for Somalia. We do this because we all share an interest in peace in the Horn of Africa. The future of Somalia matters not only to its citizens, but to a region that is crucial for global stability.

But we also do this because we believe that the people of Somalia can and should shape the future of their country.

The "New Partnership for Somalia" we will endorse today, building on the experience of the Compact, sets the priorities and criteria for mutual accountability that should govern the relations between Somalia and the international community. It's the beginning of a new period, when a stronger Somalia can finally stand on its feet again.

We want Somalia to rise again – and today we demonstrate it in very practical terms. But the money we pledge today cannot do any miracles, without strong leadership and determination from inside Somalia. It is time to turn the opportunity you now have into real change for the people of Somalia and for the sake of the entire region – count on the EU to be there, as we have always been, to accompany you.

Thank you.