

Speech: PM speech at the London Somalia Conference

Presidents, Prime Ministers, Secretary-General Guterres, I am delighted to welcome you all to London as we come together today to support President Farmajo in building a more secure, stable and prosperous future for all the people of Somalia.

As an international community, our commitment to Somalia matters.

Not just because it is right to help Somalia to overcome the threat of terrorism and the devastating effects of years of famine and bloodshed; but also because these challenges that face Somalia affect us all.

If Somalia is a foothold for terrorist groups like Al Shabaab and Daesh, if global trade is hijacked by pirates in the Indian Ocean, or if millions are continually displaced in a desperate bid to escape poverty and drought, the impact of instability in Somalia is felt across the whole region and the wider world.

But what we have seen over the last five years is that when we work together on these issues we can make progress.

That progress has required exceptionally hard work and great sacrifice, not least from the Troop Contributing Countries to the AMISOM mission – from Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Burundi and Djibouti – from Somalis themselves, and from a broad coalition of other partners including Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the EU, America and the United Nations. But because of these efforts, Al Shabaab has been pushed back, piracy largely contained, and new momentum brought to the political process.

And I am proud of the role that Britain has played in this work.

As a Global Britain, we will continue to drive co-ordinated international efforts that increase global security and protect our values around the world.

And as we are demonstrating with our third London Conference, Britain's commitment to Somalia's future remains steadfast.

As we meet today, Somalia has a critical window of opportunity. The election of President Farmajo and his mandate for reform provides a unique chance for Somalia to take control of its security and to build an inclusive political settlement with new economic development that can help to create more jobs and livelihoods for its people.

So our task today is not to tell Somalia what to do – nor to impose our own solutions on this country from afar; but rather to get behind the new President's efforts and to support the Somali people as they work to build this new future for their country.

President Farmajo, you have already shown great leadership in forging an historic agreement between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States over the future of Somalia's army and police. You have a mandate to shape a new future for your country. And we are here today, first and foremost, to support your efforts.

So I am delighted to invite you to make your opening address.

Introduction to UN Secretary General

Thank you very much President Farmajo, for setting out such a compelling vision for the future of your country. Your leadership and your commitment to the reforms that you have described will be crucial in building the security, stability and prosperity that you seek – and that we all want to see.

In return, I hope that today you will see a renewed international commitment to support you in this mission. And there is no greater sign of this international support than the ongoing commitment of the United Nations.

This is my first opportunity to share a platform with Secretary General Guterres – and I am delighted that it is here at this conference on Somalia.

Secretary General, the fact you have chosen to attend in person today shows the significance of the United Nation's commitment to continue prioritising Somalia.

I am very pleased to be able to welcome you here to London – and to invite you to address the conference.

Main Intervention

Thank you, Secretary General, for those powerful remarks and your insight, and for the continued support of the United Nations at this important moment for Somalia's future.

As we look to that future, it is worth taking a moment to remember how far we have come. Just five years ago, Al Shabaab controlled large parts of Somalia; piracy was costing global trade \$7 billion a year and the country was recovering from a famine the previous year which had killed a quarter of a million people, half of whom were under five years old.

But today Al Shabaab have been driven back across Somalia, such that they no longer pose an existential threat to the country. International efforts to tackle piracy have helped to ensure that until March this year there had been no attacks at sea for five years. While the London Conferences in 2012 and 2013 brought new momentum to the political process, supporting the work of the nascent Federal Government.

None of this could have been achieved without the vital contributions of a broad international coalition, especially the African Union and its members.

I know that Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Burundi and Djibouti have taken heavy casualties in the fight against Al Shabaab, as indeed have Somali security

forces. But your commitment to the AMISOM mission has been fundamental to the progress that has been made.

So too, has the enormous contributions of countries like Turkey and the UAE, America, and the European Union.

Yet despite this progress, deep challenges remain.

Al Shabaab has tripled its attacks on Mogadishu, and Somali forces do not yet have the capability to take over control of their own security.

The political process still has a way to go, with Somalia once again ranked the most fragile state in the world. While the drought has left more than 6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and almost 1 million children acutely malnourished, with 2 million refugees living in camps in neighbouring countries and more than a million displaced people within Somalia.

Of course, we must continue to respond urgently to the need for humanitarian assistance. I am proud that the United Kingdom is at the forefront of these efforts, providing £110 million over two years for emergency food assistance, life-saving nutrition, safe drinking water and emergency healthcare.

Other donors have stepped up, and I welcome generous contributions from Sweden, Norway, Japan and Germany, as well as the important work of the UN in co-ordinating international efforts.

But more is needed so that everything possible can be done to help those in the hardest to reach areas.

So we will look closely at needs of the revised UN appeal and we urge others to continue to step up in the months ahead.

But if we are to support President Farmajo in building a better long-term future for his country, we must do more than tackle the consequences of this crisis, as vital as that is. We must also address its causes by building Somalia's resilience and helping to develop the security and stability that can provide the best hope of preventing similar crises in the future.

This means, first and foremost, agreeing a detailed security plan that will help Somalia to develop rapidly the structures, forces, resources and leadership needed to take control of its own security and to push on with the fight against Al Shabaab and other extremists.

And secondly, it means backing President Farmajo in his efforts to build a more inclusive, federal and democratic state, together with the economic development that can create more jobs and livelihoods for Somalia's people.

Let me briefly take each of these points in turn.

Security Pact

First, Somali-led security is the essential foundation for political and

economic progress.

We know that AMISOM are over-stretched and that Troop Contributing Countries simply cannot be expected to carry the burden of Somalia's security forever. So Somalia's forces need to be built up rapidly through a federated model that also brings in regional forces.

The Security Pact that we are proposing at this Conference will build on the historic agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States over the size, location, financing, command and control of the future Somali army and police.

It will improve the co-ordination of international efforts, including the UK's commitment to train Somali forces in Baidoa, the UAE's development of a state of the art training facility, America's training and equipping of Danab Special Forces and Turkey's work to train Somali officers and NCOs.

And it will make sure that when there are future offensives, there are also the resources and plans to get services and supplies through to areas that have been retaken from Al Shabaab control.

As part of this Pact we want to see more detailed plans for Somali security reform so that Somalia can take responsibility for its own security and enable the drawdown of AMISOM troops as conditions on the ground allow.

We want to see the integration of Somali regional forces and an increase in Somali capacity, as this will be crucial in allowing the resumption of offensives against the remaining Al Shabaab strongholds in southern Somalia, as well as continued pressure on the small Daesh affiliate in Puntland and improved security in Mogadishu. And we want to see Al Shabaab degraded as Somali security forces gradually replace AMISOM across Somalia.

To support this, the UK will provide an additional £21 million over the next two years to bolster our existing efforts to provide training and mentoring to the Somali national army and support wider capacity building for Somali institutions.

And I strongly encourage others here today to make their own commitments to support this process – and to do so, at the latest, by the time of the next security conference in October.

New Partnership for Somalia

Second, we are proposing today a new Partnership for Somalia through which President Farmajo will commit to the development of an inclusive and federal democratic state – and the international community will back him with better targeted support for the jobs and livelihoods that can drive economic recovery.

So through this new Partnership, Somalia will commit to a four year road map of reforms that include closer co-operation between Mogadishu and the regions of Somalia on security and stabilisation – and a political agreement on resource and power-sharing that can lead to a revised federal constitution.

Somalia will also work towards a fairer and more accessible justice system, it will prioritise the tackling of corruption, and set a clear path to One Person, One Vote elections in 2021.

In return, the international community will back these reforms with better targeted support for economic recovery. This will include the targeting of donor support on key investment priorities such as the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors – and support for mobilising development finance and working towards securing debt relief.

We know just how challenging President Farmajo's reforms will be to deliver. But we know too, just how vital they are. They will enable Somalis to know who is responsible for their security and their access to justice. They will give Somali people the chance to ensure that their resources are managed equitably and transparently. And they will give the federal government a greater ability to raise the vital domestic revenues that can underpin economic recovery, funding public services in areas liberated from Al Shabaab, and paying for the professional armed forces and police that are so important for Somalia's security.

And by creating more business and employment opportunities, these reforms will also mean that more of Somalia's brightest and best people will be able to stay in Somalia – or return to Somalia – to play their part in building a new future for their country.

Conclusion

The challenges we are talking about today are great – but so too is the opportunity before us.

There is much work to do – and today is only a stepping stone on the road to the better future for Somalia that we all want to see. But as we have shown in recent years, Somalia is a place where the world can unite. And if we continue to do so; if we seize this moment to come together behind the efforts of President Farmajo; if we work together to deliver this new Security Pact and support the whole of Somalia, there can be a new future for this country.

In what was once called “the world's most dangerous place”, we can defeat the terrorists, keep them out and bring Somalia the stability and prosperity it deserves.

So thank you once again for your support today. I am delighted that the Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, will be acting as the UK host for today's conference. And I look forward to hearing the details of your discussions and to working with you all in the months and years ahead, as together we support President Farmajo in building a better future for all the people of Somalia.