

Transitioning security responsibilities and preparing for equal elections in Somalia

Thank you, Madam President. Let me begin by thanking our four briefers who have really enriched our discussions here today and also by extending the UK's deepest sympathies to the families of the victims targeted in attacks by Al-Shabaab. We condemn these attacks in the strongest possible terms and we pay tribute to the role of the Somali National Army, the Somalia Police Force and AMISOM troops in their efforts to promote peace, security and stability in Somalia.

Madam President, I want to give a particularly warm welcome to SRSO Swan and to pay tribute to him and his team for the work that they have been doing over the last few months. The UN has played and will play a vital role in enabling lasting peace and security for Somalia, and we encourage full engagement and cooperation with the UN. The sanctions regime is, of course, a key part of security sector reform, and we encourage Somalia to engage in dialogue with the Panel of Experts who have been mandated by this Council.

I would also like to thank SRSO Pramila Patten for her very important briefing today and for the excellent work she has been doing with the Somali government to address conflict-related sexual violence. The government's commitment to develop a new national action plan to end sexual violence in conflict demonstrates willingness to tackle this pervasive issue. But we do share concerns about the lack of progress, in particular in passing the Sexual Offences Bill which SRSO Patten mentioned. I do hope that you will be able to come back to the Council in due course to update us on progress on the many issues that you flagged this morning.

I'd also like to thank Ms Arale for your extremely brave and very powerful briefing today about the work that you are doing on the ground and the work that your organisation and other human rights defenders are doing to strengthen human rights in Somalia. I think we all heard loud and clear your message on the need for the Security Council to integrate the issues of human rights and tackling sexual violence into our work on Somalia so thank you for being so clear. And I think your presence and our meeting today is a further reminder to this Council of the importance of women playing a central role in conflict prevention, mediation and state building. Thank you very much.

Madam President, as we heard from the SRSO, at the next 18 months will be crucial for Somalia. I want to briefly touch on three issues.

First, with regard to the elections in Jubaland, we, together with other partners around this table, have been encouraging all stakeholders to reach agreement on a single electoral process that is credible, inclusive, fair and peaceful. We are very concerned that agreement on such a process hasn't been achieved and that the existing approaches are reaching a point beyond which

the likelihood of instability and division within Jubaland has been significantly increased. We therefore call on all actors in Jubaland to refrain from violence. We encourage a reinvigoration of dialogue between regional states aimed at maintaining stability in Jubaland, Somalia and the wider region. And we call on all stakeholders to pursue any possible changes that would result in a process that enjoys wider support in Jubaland. The UK stands ready to provide our full support to such discussions through the efforts of SRSG Chief Swan and UNSOM and in partnership with the African Union and IGAD.

Madam President, the second area I want to touch on on national elections in 2020 or 2021. The swift passage of an electoral law which ensures a fair process and allows for the representation of all Somalis is vital. If it is not passed by November this year, it could seriously impact the delivery of elections on time. As it stands, the UK is particularly concerned about the insufficient provisions on representation of minority groups and women – an issue that Ms Arale also touched on in her briefing just now. We stand ready as the UK to provide support for the elections and we urge others to do the same.

Madam President, the third area of focus is security. It is vital that the Federal Government of Somalia and the member states work together to implement the national security architecture agreed at the 2017 London conference and deliver the transition plan towards Somali-led security, as this Council fought for in Resolution 2472. We agree with SRSG Swan and with Ambassador Madeira that force generation of an able, accountable, acceptable and affordable Somali security forces is absolutely vital to this. And I would also agree with the message from SRSG Patten that we need to also ensure that the Somali security forces are able to tackle the issue of sexual violence against women and girls which is so prevalent in Somalia, as we heard today. On this note, we do welcome the ongoing Somali-led joint security operations in Lower Shabelle as an as an example of good coordination between Somali and international forces. But much more remains to be done to stabilise and hold this territory in the long term and to carry out similar work elsewhere in Somalia.

In conclusion, Madam President, we agree with SRSG Swan that engagement between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States is at the heart of all of our efforts in Somalia. We therefore urge both the Federal Government and the Member States to come together to settle the remaining questions about federal power and resource sharing through a process of constitutional review to enable the continued trajectory of Somalia to inclusive and peaceful, one person, one vote elections in 2020 or 2021. It's important that a Somalia Partnership Forum in October demonstrates that the Federal Government's Relationship with the Federal Member States is a genuine partnership and that it delivers an agreed set of shared priorities to the end of 2020. External pressures continue to pose risks to political stability. The international community, regional states and this Council must use our influence constructively, invest in the federal system and institutions and increase our coordination to support Somalia in their efforts.

Thank you.