



Speech of the Somali President
H.E. Sharif Sheikh Ahmed

At the General Assembly of the United
Nations

September 25, 2010

Your Majesties, Excellencies,

Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this grand occasion of the meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, I would like to congratulate the new President of this session, Mr. Joseph Deiss, who is known for his political skills and leadership.

Under his stewardship, I am confident that this session would end successfully and will produce initiatives and resolutions that would serve humanity and the world at large.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his genuine interest and commitment to dealing with the critical international issues facing the world and the Somali issues in particular.

Mr. President,

This annual gathering brings together world leaders and their representatives in order to highlight positive accomplishments worthy of emulation and to identify common global challenges and stipulate appropriate solutions.

This meeting comes at a critical time when our contemporary world faces a series of challenges ranging from economic, social and political manifested themselves through bloody wars that threaten regional stability and international peace.

Furthermore, despite our advancement in science and technology, our world remains threatened with manmade environmental problems and natural disasters such as the recent floods in Pakistan. It is, therefore, essential and incumbent upon each member of this institution to come together to provide whatever in their capacity in terms of material, expertise and indeed moral support to alleviate the common global challenges.

Mr. President,

A few centuries ago the peoples of the world suffered from the horror of slavery and injustice through colonialism and oppressive culture in which the strong prey on the weak. It was through the collective will of nations around world that this fine institution was established in order to ensure lasting peace and security, and to guard human rights, the sovereignty of nations and the rights of people to self-determination.

However, after 65 years since its inception, we are compelled to wonder: is the world more secure and are nations more in peace with one another? Have human beings attained their ambition of good life and sustainable prosperity? Are we liberated from the bondage of ignorance and injustice? Of course, not; as this is affirmed by the rampancy of bloody and destructive wars around the world, and the proliferation of extremism and terrorism.

While there are indeed other nations that became the theatres of horror, Somalia has, in recent years, been witnessing alarmingly increasing extremist tendencies of Al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam; the former openly boasts about its allegiance to Al-Qaeda.

In the tradition of the atrocity that Al-Shabaab committed in Beledweyne Hotel in July 2009, which took the lives of a cabinet minister, other officials and civilians, their most recent savage attack were in Dec, 2009 when Al-Shabaab struck with a deadly suicide bombing that claimed the lives of dozens of newly graduated doctors during their graduation ceremony in Banadir University, four cabinet ministers, professors and family and friends of the graduating class. It is an understatement to say that Somalia direly needed those doctors.

Continuing their terrorist mayhem, and in an apparent attempt to declare that nothing is off-limits, on August 24, 2010, Al-Shabaab terrorists struck Muna Hotel during the Holy month of Ramadan, killing 4 MPs and dozens of civilians and injuring many more. This ever-growing menace is bent on joining Al-Qaida in exporting its cruelty to the international arena.

During the World Cup finals, Al-Shabaab terrorists claimed responsibility to synchronized explosions that rocked the city of Kampala, killing more than seventy innocent people who came to watch the world games.

Mr. President,

Al-Shabaab terrorists are not for the establishment of a national government in Somalia, rather they seek to establish in the Horn of Africa a terrorist hub which is managed by their Al-Qaeda handlers with the intention to wreak havoc in the region and beyond.

Furthermore, there is another type of terrorists which threatens maritime and international trade. This type of terrorists is perpetrated by pirates in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden. The terrorists and pirates are now closely collaborating to wreak havoc; to instill fear, and to promote destabilization and lawlessness on land and in the high seas.

Mr. President,

The solution for this twin danger of terrorism and piracy lies in restoring peace and stability on land in war-torn Somalia.

On the other hand, there indeed are other threats which are of great concern to my people are the illegal fishing and the dumping of toxic waste in the Somali territorial waters. These illegal activities have provoked the wrath of the Somali people and subsequently led to piracy and other illicit criminal acts. It is now an established fact that the toxic wastes dumped in the Somali territorial waters have induced deadly diseases that were not common in Somalia before.

We call upon the international community to address the menaces posed by the Al-Shabaab terrorism sponsored by Al-Qaeda. Any delay in addressing this clear and present danger would sustain and prolong regional instability and international terrorism.

Mr. President,

After a protracted conflict in Somalia, the Djibouti peace conference has led to an agreement that has been endorsed by the international community. This agreement has produced a broad based and inclusive national government. However, this government faces tremendous post-conflict challenges. With solid determination, albeit very limited resources, we have been able to overcome some of the most pressing problems and to withstand the threats that emanate from Al-Shabaab terror network.

For instance, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) has reached an agreement with parties that were outside of the Djibouti agreement such as Ahlu Sunna Wa Jamee'a as well as elements from Hizbul Islam militants.

Other TFG accomplishments include the rehabilitation of the government institutions and recruiting competent professionals (though small in number) the delivery foodstuff to the needy and to the internally displaced people, creating employment opportunities for the youth, capacity building for the civil service, training for the security forces, the preparation of the draft constitution, re-commissioning of the judiciary organs, creating an environment conducive to national dialogue and reconciliation, and ending internal discord through democratic processes.

Today from this podium, in front of the world leaders, I urge you Excellencies to continue with your commitment to the Somalia cause and to assist us in providing training for our national security forces and in supporting the African Union contingent in Somalia.

Mr. President,

I call upon the UN Security Council to pass a strong resolution with the view to deterring the spread of Al Qaeda terrorists and their home-grown affiliates such as Al-Shabaab. Furthermore, I call upon the member states to continue with their support to the TFG to enable her to provide the direly needed services to the Somali people and in her efforts that aim at stabilizing Somalia.

I also call upon the international community to invest in the rehabilitation of some of the critical state institutions. As you are aware, Mr. President, the absence of fully functioning legal system contributes greatly to the continuation of lawlessness on land and in the high seas. As education and health-care infrastructures that are critical for public services have collapsed, Somalia needs assistance from its friends.

Mr. President,

Allow me to conclude with a profound sense of gratitude to the international community for its positive role in assisting Somalia to emerge out of the abyss of chaos and to regain its status among the peaceful community of nations.

By the same token, Mr. President, I would like to emphasize the gravity of the current political and economic situation, and that unfulfilled promises will not, in any way, assist Somalia out of the current perilous condition. Therefore, Mr. President, I appeal to this august body and all individual member nations who pledged to help Somalia to fulfill their promises.

Mr. President,

I would like to express my profound gratitude to the African Union, and particularly the troop contributing countries of Uganda and Burundi, the United States and European governments, the League of Arab States, and specifically to the brotherly Arab countries that have and continue to extend a helping hand to Somalia and its people as well as the African Union, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and indeed to IGAD as some of its member states have sacrificed to send their sons and daughters to put their lives on the line in order to help Somalia to become peaceful and fully functioning state once again.

Likewise, I would like to extend my gratitude to all international institutions—particularly the United Nations—and non-governmental agencies who work tirelessly in delivering direly needed services.

I wish this body all the best and success, as I wish for my country and people.

With good plan, commitment, and continued support, Somalia could, for the first year in two decades, be reporting good news: peace, progress and prosperity.

May peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you!