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Permanent Mission of the Somali  
Republic to the United Nations

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**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE  
66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**STATEMENT  
BY**

**H.E. Dr Abdiweli Mohamed Ali  
Prime Minister of Somalia**

**Saturday, September 24 2011**

Mr President, Mr Secretary-General, fellow delegates, ladies and gentleman:

Mr President, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as President of the Sixty Sixth Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I would also like to congratulate our Secretary General of the United Nations on his re-election for a second term. We Somalis would like to thank him for his leadership as he put Somalia on the top of the agenda despite having too many competing priorities. We hope that Somalia will become peaceful and stable during his tenure.

It is my honour to address you for the first time as the Prime Minister of Somalia. I come before you mindful of the enormous challenges of this important moment in our history and determined to act boldly in the cause of peace, justice and stability, not only on the Horn of Africa but on the African continent at large and in the world as a whole.

The United Nations was founded on the conviction that the nations of the world could come together in the spirit of cooperation to tackle their common problems for the sake of the whole of humanity. I wish to speak of the challenges facing Somalia whose effects have found ample expression in the current dire situation in the country, and some of which threaten each country represented here.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister of Turkey for his genuine leadership and for highlighting the plight and the suffering of those people affected by the famine.

The seemingly unending humanitarian crisis in Somalia has many and varied causes. Decades of conflict, the demise of the central state, poor and kleptocratic leadership and struggles between clans for limited resources, exacerbated by cycles of devastating droughts, have created chronic food shortages, an underdeveloped economy and has driven the population to despair. In recent years, the global terrorist organisation, Al Qaeda, has sought to exploit these divisions and weaknesses to plot and execute attacks on the rest of the world. Our people know only too well the destruction that a few people, blinded by an ideology of extremism and terror, can wreak on a country. It is this small minority, primarily the Al Qaeda affiliated group al Shabaab, that is responsible for the current famine that is spreading throughout the country through their policies of systematically looting grain stores; forcible recruitment of and extortion from farmers and their families; and preventing access to the most affected regions in the south to aid agencies.

However, the threat they pose is not limited to our borders. Foreign fighters have sought to export their noxious extremism to the rest of the Horn, recruiting and sponsoring acts of terror in neighbouring

countries such as Uganda, where last year they murdered 76 innocent people. The insecurity they have created in the south of Somalia has led to a large influx of refugees into Kenya and Ethiopia, straining resources and spreading instability across the region.

They are also actively planning to strike further afield. Just this week, one of the leaders of the al Shabaab said the group is committed to continuing its battle against the government of Somalia and also seeks to destroy both the United States and the United Nations. It is also a well known fact that the al Shabaab have been focussing their recruitment and radicalisation efforts on Somali Diasporas in Australia, Europe, Canada and in the USA.

Clearly, the battle against Al Qaeda is one in which we all have a stake and in which we all, therefore, have responsibilities. In Somalia, we have been doing what we can, within our limited resources, to fulfill our obligations in this regard. Barely a month after US forces killed Osama bin Laden, one of his most wanted deputies, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, was shot dead by Somali security forces on the outskirts of Mogadishu. Shortly thereafter, with the aid of African Union forces, the Somali National Army succeeded in forcing the extremists to withdraw the bulk of their forces from the capital. As a result, we are now able to begin to provide needed humanitarian assistance to the city's ever increasing population of internally displaced persons who are fleeing the areas still held by the extremists where the famine has hit hardest.

Though the extremists' retreat from Mogadishu is a welcome development, it may herald a new and more dangerous phase of the conflict as they increasingly turn to asymmetric tactics such as suicide bombings and the use of improvised explosive devices targeting the civilian populace. As we continue build up our capacities, our security agencies are alert to this threat and have already successfully disrupted a number of planned attacks, including several targeting the hungry at feeding centers.

Mr. President,

Terrorism preys on decaying states, exploiting the poverty and the ungoverned spaces to radicalize, recruit and plan. This is why the extremists have consistently fought against the Somali Peace Process and sought to destroy the institutions it has generated. Somalia's leaders are redoubling efforts to achieve national reconciliation and entrench democratic governance. Three weeks ago, with the help of our international partners, we hosted a National Consultative Conference in Mogadishu -the first - during which the transitional institutions and representatives of regional administrations came together

to adopt a Roadmap to the re-establishment of permanent, legitimate and representative government for the country.

This conference, the culmination of Somali-led reconciliation initiatives dating back to the Arta Declaration of May 2000, represents the best hope for Somalia to establish a firm political foundation from which to rebuild. The Roadmap is a significant achievement for the Somali Peace Process. Its adoption marks the first of many steps on the path to the eventual conclusion of the transition process in a responsible and productive manner. It has also shed light on the remaining transitional tasks, including the drafting and promulgation of a new constitution. The Transitional Federal Institutions have committed to meeting the specific timelines and benchmarks for their implementation as outlined in the Roadmap and this will allow the Somali people to monitor our performance in this regard.

The support of the international community is also crucial to ensuring its success. Indeed the Conference itself would not have taken place but for the continued engagement of the international community.

Let me also take this opportunity to express my gratitude, on behalf of the entire nation, to the African Union, and especially Uganda and Burundi, for the support they have given and the sacrifices they have made so far in this worthy cause. The fact that the Conference was safely held in Mogadishu is testimony to the achievements in security that their forces have made possible in the city. I must also thank all the countries represented here for the bilateral and multilateral support given to both the transitional institutions and the AU Mission in Somalia, without which none of what has been achieved, would have been possible.

Going forward, as we embark on the final leg of the transition process, we will continue to need your help and support. The Roadmap has illuminated the path and though dangers may lie in the shadows, we will not divert from it. We ask that you continue to accompany us on this journey and continue to provide needed resources as we advance towards full sovereignty

Despite the remarkable progress we have made so far, the gains we have made remain fragile and consolidating them will require resilience and unity from all. It is critical that the Somali Army and AMISOM are urgently reinforced so they can prevent a security vacuum in the areas of Mogadishu recently vacated by the fleeing extremists, and make the city safe for both residents and aid workers. The immediate deployment of the extra 3000 AMISOM troops already authorized by the UN Security Council would be a crucial first step. Along with this, I have asked the Security Council to reconsider

the request from the African Union to expand the force strength to 20,000 troops and provide them with the necessary resources and support, including an air and marine component, so that the zone of safety can be expanded to include the rest of the country.

In addition to this, we must also begin to demonstrate to the people the fruits of peace and democracy and to reverse the harmful effects of radicalisation. Somalia needs the help of the outside world to rebuild its economy and provide jobs for the millions of our young people who have been deprived of opportunities by the anarchy of the past two decades. We must show them that there is a better alternative to the gun.

The effort must begin at home. Let me be the first to acknowledge that, in the past, we Somalis made mistakes, which eroded the trust the international community has in our institutions. Somalia can and must do better. In this time of national crisis, we the Somali people must set aside our differences and come together to confront the perils. Reconciliation must become our mantra as we work to further the peace process and create an environment conducive for the delivery of aid. We in the political class must also accept our responsibility for the errors of the past and resolve to do better. The Somali people have had enough of war and hunger; enough of political wrangling and corruption. They demand, and indeed deserve, a government that puts the national interest before personal ambition; one that fosters unity, not division.

The Transitional Federal Government is making efforts to reverse this and to instil a sense of patriotism and responsibility. We are making good progress in injecting professionalism and transparency into revenue collection and economic management systems, as well as to strengthen internal mechanisms governing dispersal of government money and create a more open and accountable fiscal and monetary system. The Central Bank of Somalia is up and running and the economic reforms have resulted in the doubling of revenue from the Mogadishu Seaport and quadrupled those from the Aden Ade International Airport. The funds are being reinvested in provision of services to the people as our current capability allows. For example, 15 per cent of the revenue collected from the Seaport has been set aside for the rehabilitation of the city. As a result, for the first time in twenty years Mogadishu is being cleared of rubble; roads are being repaired and streets lit; markets, hospitals and schools are reopening. A register containing the names and biometric data of all members of the security forces has been compiled and our soldiers are receiving their allowances regularly.

As required by the Roadmap, we have also embarked on the process of identifying nominees to the Interim Independent Anti-Corruption Commission and we are formulating a National Fiscal Budget for the coming fiscal year.

As with the gains in the security sector, in order to entrench and safeguard these reforms, and to deliver on the expectations of the Somali people, we in the Transitional Federal Government must improve on our performance and create necessary conditions for the growth of the Somali economy. However, the scale of the challenge is such that we will continue to rely on the help of our international partners. It is understandable that in the prevailing global economic environment, many in the wealthier countries will be tempted to look to their own problems to the detriment of providing aid and investment to their poorer cousins in the developing world. I would caution against this. The visionaries who founded this body understood that it was impossible to secure economic benefits for a section of the global population for as long as these remain a distant dream for the rest and sought to establish an interlinked global political and economic infrastructure which ensured that citizens in every country could participate in, and partake of the fruits of, global prosperity. I therefore urge the international community to continue its generous support for the emerging economic institutions as we strive to rebuild the destroyed infrastructure and to jump start economic activity in the areas our forces are securing.

To the business community, I say Somalia is truly Africa's sleeping giant and a relatively small investment here will go a long way. With the longest coastline on the continent, bountiful and unexploited natural wealth and an entrepreneurial tradition that dates back to the Roman times, a peaceful Somalia would be a force for moderation and an engine of growth and prosperity for the region and for the continent. Further, the integration of Somalia into the global economy will have a considerable and beneficial impact on the phenomenon of piracy from our shores, which imposes huge costs on global trade. As has been noted by many observers, the lasting solution to this menace is not to be found in policing the high seas. The regeneration of a vibrant economy on the land, providing jobs and opportunity for all, is the sole antidote.

Mr. President,

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains dire. The UN has declared famine in a sixth region which means that up to half the population is now facing the prospect of starvation. Many of these continue to come to the capital seeking refuge and over half a million have already arrived.

To deal with this situation and to oversee the delivery of humanitarian assistance, a high level cabinet committee has been created and, as per its recommendations, the government has established several camps to house and feed them. A Disaster Management Agency, comprising members of the civil society has also been established and we are working with UN agencies such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Program to synchronize our efforts to deal with the famine.

On behalf of the entire Somali nation, I wish to express my gratitude for the pledges of assistance that have been received from governments and humanitarian agencies around the world. The greatest need, however, continues to be felt within areas still under the effective control of the extremists, where access by international humanitarian agencies is severely restricted. The insurgents are also hampering the freedom of movement of millions who are trying to reach help either in Mogadishu or in neighboring countries.

Without urgent interventions to change this situation, it is estimated that up to three-quarters of a million people may perish in the next few months. Though normal to above-normal rainfall is expected to return in the next three months, this is unlikely to result in a significant easing of the crisis in the short term since the harvest would not be expected till February. In any case, the production from the short rain season only accounts for a third of total annual cereal production. The displacement of farmers by the current famine will only further reduce the expected yield. In fact, the UN has indicated that it expects the famine to spread to the rest of the south by the end of the year.

It is therefore critical that we accelerate efforts to reach those in al Shabaab controlled areas, while at the same time ensuring that international humanitarian workers are afforded a measure of security against attacks and kidnappings by the insurgents. As I noted earlier, the international community must urgently reinforce our efforts to extend the zone of safety for aid workers beyond Mogadishu and into these areas. In the meantime my government will continue to work closely with humanitarian agencies to collect and share information on needs and we stand ready to cooperate with all actors to ensure aid gets to the most critically affected populations wherever they may be.

As stated before, the challenges I have outlined have been aggravated by the increasing cycles of devastating drought that we experience as a result of the changes in global climate patterns. We in the Horn of Africa have been affected more than most. As I speak, the region is experiencing its worst

drought in a generation and the scale of the suffering in my country is testament to price we are having to pay.

There needs to be a concerted effort not just to address the causes of climate change but also to mitigate the adverse effects, especially in countries such as Somalia that have contributed little to the problem but are bearing the brunt of its consequences. In this regard, let me reiterate the appeal issued during the recent Summit on the Horn of Africa Crisis held in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, for developed nations to facilitate the transfer of technology and building up of the capacity of developing nations to adapt to these challenges. Somalia will require assistance to improve water resource management and reduce our reliance on rain-fed agriculture even as we strive to implement the targets agreed to at the Nairobi Summit of ten percent forest cover and irrigated land by the year 2017.

In conclusion, today the future of Somalia hangs in the balance and with it the prospect of peace, stability and prosperity on the Horn of Africa and security for nations across the world. Resolute global action in support our efforts is now required if we are to consolidate and build on the gains already made, and extend them to the rest of the country for the sake of future generations.

Furthermore, we fully support the right of Palestine to become a full member of the Community of Nations. We believe the two-state solution for the Palestinian – Israeli problem, where Palestinians should be allowed to live in peace and dignity in their own homeland. We have all seen the changes happening in the Arab World and the international community must support the peaceful and democratic aspirations of the people. We must all support the National Transitional Council of Libya in order to bring peace and stability in that country.

Thank You.