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Permanent Mission of the Somali
Republic to the United Nations

Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud

President of the Federal Republic of Somalia

at the

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check against delivery!

Mr President, Mr Secretary General, Excellencies, Members of the 69th Assembly.

It is a pleasure to join you today.

Yesterday, a journalist asked me to describe Somalia in 15 seconds. Firstly, let me say that Somalis are great story-tellers, so asking a Somali to say anything in 15 seconds is very difficult!

I really had to think. Where to begin?

I told him that if he could think of a problem, then Somalia has it- and often at the same time: war, piracy, extremist terrorist groups, famine, drought, floods.

But that WAS Somali, not the Somalia of today.

For many, I fear that their experience of Somalia is confined to films like the recent 'Captain Phillips' or re-runs of 'Black Hawk Down'. It is confined to the Youtube scenes of the horrific Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi, Kenya. It is narrowed down to yet another title on a library bookshelf including the words, 'failed state'. It is limited to reference of a 'long war'.

But if we were to shrink our gaze to just this small glimpse we would miss the beauty of a very different picture that we are painting right now in Somalia.

The Somalia I lead is a very different Somalia. My Somalia is not a 15 second summary of problems. It is not a Somalia of failure. Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen - We may still be fragile, but we are no longer broken.

September 2012 marked a milestone for Somalia with the establishment of a new federal government, built through a national consensus, and unanimously recognised by the international community.

On its appointment, the Federal Government of Somalia faced multiple complex challenges, a stark lack of resources, and only very basic institutional and government structures. The country was divided; with no clear path to unification. Al-Shabaab, and other militia groups controlled most of the country. The task ahead of us was daunting and expectations were high.

Everything was a priority: from security, political inclusivity, health care, education and private sector development, to basic economic reform. We faced the significant challenge of simultaneously building frameworks and institutions, whilst needing to immediately deliver tangible benefits for our people- schools, hospitals, roads and more.

We needed to deliver against this long list of inter-related priorities in an environment that is politically fragmented on one hand, whilst fighting a war against terrorist groups on the other. And we have done this.

The foundation for the future has been laid through our clear military defeat of Al-Shabaab, possible only through the joint effort of the Somali National Army and the African Union Mission to Somalia. More than 70% of south and central regions Somalia has now been liberated from Al-Shabaab and restored to the Federal Government.

Over the past two years we have focused on building a foundation and laying down the groundwork for stabilisation and ensuing reform.

We have developed legal frameworks, governance structures, public financial management processes, formalised Somalia's presence in the international community, strengthened relations with neighboring countries, re-structured key institutions, established forums for dialogue, developed the path for political reform and put in place the architecture for linking international support to our priorities through the New Deal Somali Compact.

We have made major progress in public financial management, putting in place greater accountability measures, controls and governance structures. Key

legislation has been drafted, budget policy developed and the capacity of the Accountant General and Auditor General offices strengthened. An annual budget, developed against government-wide work plans has been delivered. A new Governor and Board of Directors have been appointed for the Central Bank of Somalia. A Financial Governance Committee - a joint committee between the Federal Government and International Financial Institutions - was established to provide greater transparency and oversight.

We can be heartened that such distinct progress has been made in positively the country moving from failed state to a nascent, functioning state.

Today- September 2014- I am confident that with the support of the Somali people and the engagement of the international community, Somalia has undergone a remarkable transformation. Today, we have a country that is beginning to unite as nation, behind a vision that will see a federal and united Somalia in 2016: a Somalia which will meet our aspirations for a better future.

But we cannot rest.

Somalia has always had an enormous capacity for playing the long game. And now, more than ever, we must stay our course.

Somalia is at a critical juncture in its efforts to achieve security and stability. This past year has seen a rise in terrorist groups and activities around the world. Today, the reach of terrorists is not confined to just one country; it is a global issue, with global action required. More than any other fragile state today, Somalia has significantly advanced in its fight against terror.

We are winning the war but we must also win peace.

President Obama spoke earlier this week of being at the crossroads of war and peace. As Somalis, we know better than many other nations, the truth of this statement.

That is why we know that solutions must not just be military in nature.

Yesterday we were reminded of the origins behind the establishment of the United Nations. We were reminded of the power of peaceful political reconciliation.

Military intervention *can* bring about a cessation of war, but it *cannot* propagate peace.

Dialogue, reconciliation, forgiveness- these are the tools of peace builders. These are the tools of nation builders.

As the President of Somalia, I reaffirm our commitment to not allowing extremist ideology, or its servants, any hiding place in Somalia. Somalia is strategically located as a gateway between the Arabian peninsula and the African continent. Al-Shabaab must not be defeated only for other extremist groups, such as the ISIS militant group, to find fertile ground.

As the security situation in Somalia improves, and Al-Shabaab becomes a spent force, we cannot afford to rest.

We must strengthen Somalia as a firewall: both security-wise and ideologically. Somalia *must* be strengthened to prevent the African continent from again being invaded by violent extremists, who target innocent civilians, spreading their ideology of death.

Solutions must be sought through the application of the rule of law, through the pursuit of human rights, through access to justice. People must be allowed to determine their own future, and their own place in that future.

We must not forget the importance of political reconciliation and reform for maintaining long-term stability, and creating an enabling environment for development gains.

Two years ago, it quickly became clear that the key to delivering peace and building sustainable security was the formation of a unified and federal Somalia. Vision 2016 was developed to encapsulate this goal.

Vision 2016 outlines the framework for federalism through reconciliation, adoption of a revised permanent constitution and the path to democratic elections.

It is a tall order. This cannot be overstated.

By 2016, the Federal Government has undertaken to revise our Provisional Federal Constitution and adopt it through public referendum. We have undertaken to deliver a federal Somalia, made up of member states. We have undertaken to deliver credible, national elections. We have not failed on the side of ambition, and we must not fail to deliver on our ambition. And we are delivering.

Led by the Federal Government, together with existing and emerging regional stakeholders, we have made significant progress in the formation of interim regional administrations in south-west and central regions of Somalia through dialogue and consultation.

The Constitution Review and Implementation Commission was completed in May 2014. The review, approval and adoption of the Provisional Federal Constitution is critical to an inclusive political settlement that will pave the way for sustainable security and development in Somalia.

In order to create a federal state, it will be essential to ensure the full participation by sub-federal administrations in the political transformation of Somalia. The Boundaries and Federation Commission will be established and will set the mechanisms for supporting this process.

The National Independent Electoral Commission will be endorsed by Parliament by the end of 2014.

The Federal Government is committed to inclusivity and is taking concrete steps to engage all Somalis in the political process of nation-building - including women and minority groups - observing the principles of Somali-Somali dialogue.

We have seen great progress in connecting the Government to the Somali public through improving service delivery, particularly in the area of education. We have now enrolled close to 100,000 students and appointed 2000 teachers.

We are investing in strengthening our Somali national forces. The SNA is a key element in defeating Al Shabaab, and we are working with our international partners to ensure that we have a well trained, well equipped, national army, and other defence elements in place, so that Somalia will one day be well able to defend its own peace.

However, It grieves me to report today that the humanitarian situation in Somalia today is extremely critical.

About 3.2 million Somalia need life-saving or livelihood assistance in Somalia right now.

A terrible mix of drought, rising food prices, increasing malnutrition, and insecurity is plunging the humanitarian situation in Somalia into a crisis not dissimilar to the horrific famine of 2011.

More than 1 million people in Somalia face acute food insecurity today. Of a population of 7.5 million, more than 1 million people are internally displaced.

Three months ago the humanitarian community and the Federal Government sounded the alarm about the impending crisis.

Humanitarian response plans were prepared and launched. Swift action by the Federal Government- to set up an interim Ministerial Committee, and interventions with humanitarian partners and donors has mitigated the current

crisis. However, a sustained and scaled up response is required now to prevent a free fall.

The Humanitarian Appeal remains severely underfunded. Only 32% of the requested US\$933million has been received.

This situation must be addressed urgently. As we enter the last third of the year, more than half a billion US dollars are still required for life-saving activities.

Over the past 18 months, Somalia has seen a significant amount of progress in its political, economic and development sectors. If the current humanitarian situation deteriorates into crisis, all these gains will be undermined. We have come too far to allow this to happen.

Mr President, it is clear that despite challenges, Somalia is moving along the road of integration, of inclusivity, of peace. We are leaving behind the disorder and discord sewn by distorted ideology.

I was told a story recently, a remarkable story of truth that I think illustrates perfectly the power of reconciliation and the triumph of compassion over brutality.

One of our Somali NGOs is running a social reconciliation program in some remote areas of Somalia. It consists of 12 weeks of intense facilitated truth discussion, designed to disrupt the cycle of violence and create a safe space where people can tell their stories, and through story telling nurture understanding.

A young man, whose family had moved to another country when his father was murdered by another man from his village, heard of this program. He heard that the Somali NGO was training program facilitators, people who would be able to move freely from village to village and teach others the way of peace and reconciliation. Rather than an opportunity to pursue peace, this young man, filled with anger at his father's murder, saw it as the ideal way for him to extract

revenge. He would return to Somalia, undertake the course training, gain access to his family's old village under a false pretext, and while he was there he would kill his father's murderer.

So, he came home to Somalia. He bought a weapon. He went through the training. He went to the village. He ensured that his father's murderer attended the training, and he harbored the destruction of his father's enemy in his heart. But then, something started to happen. As he helped the villagers tell their stories of violence, of the endless cycle of horror, of the terrible choices they had had his heart softened. He understood that any choice that involved violence was a not a choice at all. One day, he stood up at the training, addressed his father's murderer, explained that he had plotted to kill him, and begged his forgiveness.

In a way, this one man's story echoes the national story that we are beginning to tell in Somalia, that our future will not be built on the ashes of revenge. It will not be built on the stones of violence.

We reaffirm our choice of peace. We reaffirm that reconciliation- the path that we have chosen - will be won through dialogue, through inclusive politics, through creating a shared vision of what Somalia can be.

Our success requires the support of our international partners, but most of all it demands the ownership and commitment of the Somali people.

As we continue towards democratisation, this is not time for skepticism. We have laid out our plans and we need to stand together to execute and deliver.

Our achievements and progress have been made possible by the determination of our Somali people. We welcome and acknowledge the staunch support of our international partners and look forward to their continuing engagement behind our nationally-led agenda.

I acknowledge the commitment and sacrifice of our Somali defence institutions and grieve the loss of our soldiers and security staff who have died in the pursuit of peace.

I renew my commitment to serve the Somali people. Somalia is indebted to their resilience and perseverance in the face of extraordinary challenges.

Somali looks forward to walking with you – the family of United Nations, towards a peaceful, prosperous future.

Thank you.