COMMUNIQUÉ:  HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON SOMALIA, NEW YORK, 24 SEPTEMBER 2014

Today’s meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and H.E. Mr. Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations. The participants’ list is attached. Our discussions focused on the political process in Somalia, in the light of the Federal Government’s ‘Vision 2016’ plan for political transformation, and in preparation for the Ministerial High-Level Partnership Forum to be held in Copenhagen on 19-20 November 2014.

We commend the Federal Government of Somalia that under its leadership, significant progress has been made towards the creation of a sovereign, secure, democratic, united and federal Somalia at peace with itself and the world, and for the benefit of its people.

We welcome the important steps taken so far to implement the Federal Government’s ‘Vision 2016’ plan and realise the New Deal Somali Compact. We welcome progress in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Agreement of 28 August 2013, with the facilitation of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and its partners, as well as the agreements to form interim regional administrations in south-west and central regions of Somalia. We welcome the discussions led by the Federal Government for the establishment of district, regional, and interim regional administrations, and encourage all stakeholders in the regions to engage in these efforts.

We emphasise the importance of completing the establishment of interim regional administrations throughout Somalia by the end of 2014, based on principles of political inclusivity and transparency, in accordance with Vision 2016 and the Provisional Federal Constitution.

We recognise that 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. We welcome the establishment of the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission, and emphasise the importance of establishing the Boundaries and Federation Commission within the upcoming parliamentary session to allow the constitutional review process to gather momentum. We stress the importance of the full participation by sub-federal administrations in the political transformation of Somalia, as set out in the Vision 2016 plan and the Provisional Federal Constitution.

We welcome the Federal Government’s commitment to conduct legitimate and inclusive national elections in 2016, and recognise its leadership role in the process. We further recognise the
Federal Government’s enduring commitment to universal one-person-one-vote elections. We emphasise the importance of urgently establishing the National Independent Electoral Commission, including passing the necessary enabling legislation by November 2014. Noting the great challenges to preparing elections in Somalia, we recommend an electoral assessment by the United Nations, in close consultation with the African Union, including the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and other partners, before the end of 2014 to aid the Commission-led process and to commence planning for the elections.

We emphasise that inclusive political processes and the unity of Somalia’s political institutions will be critical to further progress. We welcome and pledge our support to the national reconciliation and political dialogue taking root across Somalia. We value the important contribution being made to these efforts by Somali civil society, including from the diaspora. Women, youth and minority groups must fully participate in shaping Somalia’s political future. We further recognise the importance of outreach to marginalised groups, as well as the establishment of a properly resourced and comprehensive disengaged combatants’ programme that is consistent with international human rights standards.

We welcome the steps taken by the Federal Government to implement more effective and transparent financial management, including the work of the Financial Governance Committee, and we urge progress to continue.

Political progress must proceed as part of a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding in Somalia. The promotion and protection of human rights, and the protection of the most vulnerable, including women and children affected by armed conflict, must be central. We recognise the Federal Government’s pledge to fulfill their commitments including by establishing the Independent Human Rights Commission and urge further progress in this regard.

Security and stabilisation of the country are essential prerequisites to enduring peace. We recognise the ongoing professionalisation of the Somali National Army (SNA) and the Somali Police Force, and noted the need for greater flexibility and logistical support. We thank the African Union for its sustained commitment to Somalia, and applaud the sacrifice and bravery of the SNA and AMISOM troops in the cause of peace. We note the importance of SNA and AMISOM troops continuing to conduct themselves in accordance with relevant international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. We note with concern the allegations of sexual exploitation made by a Human Rights Watch report released on 8 September 2014, and take note of the AU response in its statement of the same date, including its commitment that the allegations will be thoroughly investigated, and appropriate measures taken as required, in accordance with the AU’s zero-tolerance policy. We agree on the importance of securing supply routes to the newly recovered areas to enable the ongoing military offensive and stabilisation efforts. We stress the importance of working together under the leadership of the Federal Government to bring governance and security to newly recovered areas. Failure to do so risks reversing hard won political and security gains. We reaffirm our commitment to support Somali authorities in defeating Al-Shabaab and reiterate our strong condemnation of all forms of terrorism and extremism.
We are very concerned by the deepening humanitarian emergency in Somalia. A humanitarian crisis will have dramatic consequences for the lives of Somali people, in particular women and children. It will also have political consequences. The situation must be urgently addressed, and secure, sustained access as well as funding provided to enable sufficient levels of humanitarian assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles. We emphasise the importance of responding to immediate humanitarian needs whilst also investing in building resilience and promoting longer-term solutions in line with the Federal Government’s priorities. Somalia’s humanitarian emergency has consequences for the wider region, and in this context we welcome the communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting on the Somali Refugee Situation in Addis Ababa on 20 August 2014.

The international community remains fully committed to supporting the Federal Government and the people of Somalia in their work for peace, stability, human rights, development and security. We affirm that Somalia and its international partners will have no tolerance for those who undermine these goals.

We call on all Somalis to work together in the interests of peacebuilding and statebuilding, as set out in the Somali Compact, and we look forward to the upcoming Ministerial High-Level Partnership Forum in Copenhagen as an opportunity to take stock of progress, agree the key priorities for 2015 and ensure concrete results.