Statement to the UN Security Council (via VTC)

By

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Mr President,

Thank you for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on Somalia. I am particularly pleased to do so again with my colleague, Ambassador James Swan. Our partnership is proof of the strong cooperation that exists between the African Union and the United Nations, which remains vital to our collective support to Somalia.

Let me begin by recognising that there have been significant developments in Somalia since I last briefed this Council in May. These developments are, in large part, due to the determination of Somalia’s leaders to get together and consult on bold steps required to strengthen the country’s capacity to fight Al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups, build the state of Somalia and strengthen its institutions and stabilize the country through the provision of essential goods and services to the people.

Inclusive Politics

The emerging resumption of dialogue and collaboration between the leaders of the Federal Government and those of the federal member states is the most salient political development that has happened in the period under consideration. If harnessed and facilitated, this development can unlock the great potential of the Somali people to put in the second plan what divides them, and build on the factors that bring them together and strengthen the unity and solidarity of their people.

I commend the personal efforts of President Mohamed Abdullahi “Farmaajo” and that of the presidents of the Federal member states who, through emissaries, direct and indirect contacts, consultations, exchanges and mutual reassurances, have laid the ground work that made a reality this crucial development, the Dhussamarreb Process.

In Dhusumarreb, we’ve seen President Farmajo meeting bilaterally with President Madobe of Jubaland and discussing their issues; we witnessed President Farmajo exchanging views one on one with President Deni of Puntland, with president Whare of Irshabelle and with president Laftagreen of South West State. We’ve seen president Qor Qor preparing the ground and welcoming president Farmajo and all the other presidents to the big meeting.

These meetings are important and necessary and should cease to be historic developments. They must be made to repeat themselves with such a frequency, that they
become normal events, regular encounters of leaders united in a common purpose of making their country a better place for all their people. We regret that President Deni and President Madobe are not present in Dhusamarreb. We, international partners and friends of Somalia, have an important role to play to make this necessary transformation a reality.

The Dhusamareeb process deserves our unwavering support, as it represents a clear signal of the intent of Somali leaders to work towards a political consensus. The African Union, through AMISOM, is there, in Dhusamarreb, supporting the Somali security forces in ensuring security for this grand encounter.

While the parties will require much more commitment and trust to ensure the Dhusamarreb talks are a success, the African Union will continue to, not only secure the process but also offer its political support where needed.

Mr President,

The African Union welcomes the developing dialogue between President “Farmaajo” and the “Somaliland” leader, Mr. Muse Bihi. The latest round of talks held in June brokered by President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti stands as the second this year. More importantly, this is evidence of Somalia’s commitment to dialogue as a means of resolving its national differences. We are equally aware that the talks’ joint technical committee is yet to meet again, and we underscore the importance of these talks continuing.

Mr President,

The resumption of dialogue between the Federal Government and the federal member states has the real potential to act as a catalyst for achieving critical national priorities. I am encouraged so far, that the resumption of dialogue has already allowed for Somali stakeholders at all levels to engage in frank and inclusive discussions in search of a consensual approach to the issue of elections and its modalities. We, partners of Somalia, must strive to ensure that the discussions remain all-inclusive because it is this inclusivity that lends legitimacy and will determine the consistency and implementability of the consensus that may be reached in the Dhusamarreb process.
Following the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) report to Parliament on 27 June, AMISOM, at the request of the NIEC Chairperson, has enhanced its discussions on election security, the securing of the NIEC’s new premises, and the African Union Commission’s (AUC) technical support to the NIEC prior to and during the elections.

I am also pleased to report that AMISOM’s Police Component that will play a critical role in election security, is regularly engaging their Somali counterparts on areas of support. In this context, AMISOM Police are currently training Somali Police on the use of mapping tools for election security threat assessments. Despite this support, it remains essential, as part of election preparation, that the important work of the National Electoral Security Task Force (NESTF), resumes as soon as practically possible.

Security

Mr President,

I remain concerned at the threat of Al-Shabaab across Somalia, which is demonstrated by the extremist group’s sustained attacks against government officials, businesses, civilians, security forces, and international personnel.

The fight against Al-Shabaab will continue to require concerted effort. At the centre of these efforts must be the enhanced collaboration, coordination, coherence, improved information sharing and complementarity between the Federal Government and the federal member states, particularly as Somalia prepares to hold elections.

More must be done to degrade Al-Shabaab’s operational capacities. It is our assessment that as Somalia’s national dialogue continues to edge towards political consensus, Al-Shabaab will seek to derail these efforts. Already, Al-Shabaab, in its public statements, has unsuccessfully attempted to undermine the Dhusamarreb process and foment national discord.

Somali Transition Plan

In line with AMISOM’s tasks as stipulated in the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) Communique 923rd and Security Council Resolution 2520 (2020), I can report that
despite the ongoing impact of COVID-19, AMISOM has continued to implement the Transition Plan.

Since May, AMISOM, jointly with our partners in the Somali security forces, continued to conduct several targeted operations to disrupt, degrade and deny Al-Shabaab freedom of movement and action. In addition to these operations, we have jointly secured and maintained key supply routes.

As part of our transition tasks, we have also mentored various Somali security forces’ battalions, through our ongoing co-location, particularly in Lower Shabelle. In Lower Shabelle, as this Council is aware, recovered areas remain secure thanks to the continued joint operations and the bravery of our Somali security forces and AMISOM.

The African Union, through AMISOM, has been the foundation of progress on security in Somalia since 2007. But with this, we have thankfully witnessed the capabilities of the Somali security institutions gradually increase. This increase must continue in earnest so that Somalia is eventually able to take the lead on its security responsibilities by 2021. To this effect, it is with satisfaction that we note that the work towards the revision of the Transition plan is ongoing and the government has set a clear vision of what the revision should entail, the strategic priorities it should pursue, the actions that need to be implemented to make each strategic priority a reality and the specific tasks that need to be fulfilled and by who.

Clearly, an Improved and enhanced coordination and coherence, information sharing and accountability, transparency and complementarity will be necessary for the adopted revised transition plan to be fully and timely implemented. We are happy that this revision is taking place in tandem with efforts to revitalise the CAS mechanism, which will be more aligned to the revised transition plan activities.

A very positive feature in the current revision is that the elements of all-inclusiveness have been enhanced and the FMS have been fully included and involved from the outset. They are participating directly and actively and their views are being noted and reflected in the baseline documents that are being produced. Their seats are assured and reserved in the three technical committees tasked to produce the draft revised transition plan. This is of extreme importance as no realistically sustainable peace operation can succeed without the involvement of the concerned regions.
As we begin to review the Transition Plan, under the leadership of the Federal Government, it remains critical that a reviewed plan must focus on practical elements. These must include consensus on priority locations for transition and agreements on the realignment of tasks, particularly for international partners, as called for in the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) Communique 923rd.

Agreements on these elements will, in part, inform our collective assessment on what comprehensive support Somalia will require from key international partners in the lead to 2021 and post-2021, as called for in both the AUPSC Communique 923rd and Security Council Resolution 2520 (2020).

In terms of operations, one of the pressing issues that needs to be tackled head on and addressed as a matter of urgency, is the lack of commensurate SSF to take over and hold areas under AMISOM control and those projected for liberation from AS. This is making it difficult for AMISOM forces in various Sectors, to reconfigure and create mobile forces for targeted offensive operations as they are forced by circumstance to keep holding and protecting the populations in the towns and habitational centres they have liberated from Al-Shabab.

Therefore, realistic and feasible approaches need to be identified to effectively address the issue of the slow pace of generation of SNA forces.

As I conclude, I would like to draw the Council’s attention to the AUPSC Communique 923rd being broadly in line with paragraph 38 of resolution 2520 (2020), on the need for a (comprehensive) independent assessment. In the spirit of the AU – UN shared vision for Somalia; the African Union continues to call for a joint AU – UN effort in delivering on this important assessment.

I thank you.