

On first visit to Somalia since elections, UN political chief lauds progress

25 August 2017 – The head of the United Nations political office visited Somalia this week, where he praised the “real forward momentum” in the country’s political development, and reiterated UN support as the Horn of Africa country tackles its challenges, such as the fight against the group Al Shabaab.

“I am here to reinforce and to demonstrate the support that the UN has for the people and the Government of Somalia as the country addresses a number of challenges ranging from the drought to security, to the political agenda going forward,” [said](#) UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman.

In a series of meetings on Thursday in the capital, Mogadishu, Mr. Feltman spoke with President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo, and Prime Minister Hassan Kheyre, among others, about the progress made in Somalia in recent months.

“I sense a real forward momentum in terms of political developments, in terms of reforms and transparency and of things moving forward to one-person one-vote electoral system for the 2021 parliamentary elections,” the senior UN official said.

Mr. Feltman praised the work of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), which was created earlier this year and which is putting structures in place for the next parliamentary and presidential elections.

Following a meeting with NIEC Chairperson Halima Ibrahim, Mr. Feltman urged the Commission to move forward on the country’s constitutional review process, which will lay the foundation for the national elections.

Among other topics discussed during the visit was the need for additional international support to combat the drought affecting more than 6.2 million people in Somalia.

The visit is Mr. Feltman’s first since President Farmaajo was elected in February.

That poll was a “milestone” for the Horn of Africa nation as it moves forward after decades of war, said at the time Michael Keating, Special Representative and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia ([UNSOM](#)). Mr. Keating accompanied Mr. Feltman during Thursday’s meetings.

AUDIO: Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman urges Somalia to continue efforts towards reconciliation and state-building. Credit: UN News