

Press release: Foreign Secretary Statement at the UNSC Briefing on Somalia

I'm grateful to President Farmajo for making his first address to this Council, to Michael Keating, the Special Representative, and Special Representative Madeira for their words.

Last week, I was fortunate enough to visit Somalia at a time which the Secretary-General has described as "tragic and hopeful". Today has been a chance for President Farmajo to describe how the Federal Government plans to bring peace and stability. And, I hope you will take a clear message from this meeting that while you work for the benefit of Somalia, Mr President, the Security Council will stand with you.

But we meet at a moment when Somalia faces the daunting prospect of its third famine in 25 years. We cannot forget that the last time Somalia was blighted by starvation, in 2011, no fewer than 260,000 people died. Today, over 6 million Somalis need help. The crisis also risks undermining the hard-won political and security progress that has been made.

The good news is that if we learn the lessons of 2011 and act early and decisively, then the famine can still be prevented. Britain has contributed over \$135 million of emergency aid to Somalia this year. This UK aid will provide more than a million people with food, water and emergency health care. I would urge all our partners to support the relief effort that is now underway. And I urge the Somali Government to deliver the commitments they have made to improve access and to remove logistical blockages, as part of their welcome focus on this issue.

In Mogadishu last week, I witnessed a military training session for the Somali National Army and AMISOM troops. A heavy responsibility rests on these brave soldiers to guarantee the security, the security on which every other form of progress depends. This is a critical time for security in Somalia. We must work together to agree a clear and long term plan for international security support in Somalia. We hope to make progress on a Security Pact during the forthcoming Somalia Conference in London.

The most urgent requirement is for a political agreement between the Federal Government and Federal Member States on the security architecture of the Somali security forces. Once this has been agreed, the international community should set out its comprehensive and coordinated support to Somalia on security sector reform.

We also need to agree on the shape of a conditions-based transition away from AMISOM to the Somali security forces. I cannot commend highly enough the prowess and bravery of AMISOM soldiers and their Somali counterparts in the struggle against Al-Shabaab. They have made a real difference to Somalia and

to the security of East Africa as a whole – and we are all conscious of their sacrifice.

It is precisely because we must not allow their sacrifice to be in vain that we need to ensure a successful transition. The African Union is a central partner – and the forthcoming joint UN-AU review will be central in setting the future direction of that partnership. I hope that all members of this Council will be open minded, particularly as regards funding, so that Somalia's progress is not jeopardised by a hasty transition. Security is one urgent aspect of the broader constitutional settlement that a stable federal Somalia needs.

The Federal Government and Member States will also need to agree on how to share power and resources. Resolving these questions will be crucial for Somalia's long term stability. And I look forward to a one-person, one-vote election in four years time. I also welcome the focus of President Farmajo on promoting economic recovery and creating jobs for a new generation of young and ambitious Somalis.

For this to succeed, the Government will need to continue to make progress on important economic reforms, comply with the current IMF programme and improve the business environment. These steps will also be essential for Somalia to be able to make progress towards its aims of accessing multilateral finance and debt relief.

At this crucial time, Britain will join the UN and the Federal Government to host a Conference on Somalia in London in May. The Conference will assess the response to the humanitarian emergency, accelerate progress on security and adopt a new partnership agreement that sets the terms of the relationship between Somalia and the international community for the coming years.

A peaceful and prosperous Somalia is the aim we all share. And let me say to President Farmajo that the Security Council will stand alongside you as you strive to achieve that goal.