

Speech: Progress towards political, economic and security reforms in Somalia

Thank you very much, Mr President and a huge thank you to our briefers, Mr Zenega and Mr Madeira and to the Assistant Secretary-General. It's very good to have this. It's the first briefings we've had since UNSOM's mandate was renewed.

I think the first thing to say, Mr President, is that when we had the last meeting many of us noted that 2019 would be a very important year for Somalia – and I might even go as far as to say it would set the trend of Somalia's development for years to come. I think an important signifier of that is the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and we hope he can be in post soon. And we hope in turn that that becomes an opportunity to reset the UN-Somalia relationship and to find a way forward on the Panel of Experts. Restoration of cooperation with the UN and the international community is very important. I know the Somali Government has been thinking about this as well and that's very welcome. I think the ASG's last points show quite why this is so critical. Somalia needs the guidance and technical capability of the UN to help it with some of the detailed issues that the ASG was mentioning.

I just wanted to thank Mr Onanga for standing in and holding the fort in the interregnum between the two SRSGs. I think it's important on an occasion like this, Mr President to say something about the bravery of AMISOM in Somalia and also the great efforts made by the African Union, which we appreciate. The UN, Somalia and international partners there need to work in tandem to deliver the transition plan. I think that in tandem, in cooperation, working coherently together is a really vital part of the prospects for success. We all want to get to a stage where Somalia leads on providing security for its people. So for the United Kingdom we really welcome efforts to build the impetus in the AMISOM mandate renewal currently ongoing. But I would just stress, Mr President, that in my experience, these things work best when troop numbers are allied to the tasks that the troops have to do and not the other way round.

As I said, 2019 is important. In fact probably the next 12 months are going to be critical to making progress on political, economic and security reforms ahead of the elections in 2020/2021. And we all know that political agreements between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States are going to be at the heart of Somalia's stability and prosperity. I think in order to bring that about it's very important that there's regular and constructive dialogue between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States, particularly on the constitutional review, the electoral laws, the implementation of the security pact and the delivery of the transition plan. And I was interested to see about the prospects for the Somalia Partnership Forum which will meet this Summer.

I think the Council, Mr President would find it useful to have regular meetings and briefings so that we can help chart progress. I think it's important that we think about how we can support all sides being able to fulfil the agreed partnership principles in that forum. And it be very good to have a sense of where the UN sees the key priorities there and how they relate to the National Development Plan.

I just wanted to say something about the humanitarian situation. We wanted to have a humanitarian brief because of the deterioration – as a result of the drought. In some ways the early warning indicators we see are worse than those we witnessed two years ago. We are about to announce additional support. We hope others might be able to do likewise. I think we all know there's a real opportunity here to help Somalia get back on track, but it has very many components, one of which is cooperation with the UN. Obviously, the transition plan is important and in fact critical and anything AMISOM can do to support transition priorities is also very critical.

Thank you.