



The Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Republic
Office of the Prime Minister

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Opening Remarks by H. E. Dr Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, Prime Minister of Somalia.

SUMMIT ON THE HORN OF AFRICA
Ending Drought Emergencies;
A Commitment to Sustainable Solutions
Nairobi, September, 8th, 2011

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kenya,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Djibouti,
Deputy Speaker of Parliament of Kenya,
Under Secretary General of United Nations,
Chairperson of IGAD

Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be with you here in Nairobi. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for attending this meeting. It is indeed an honour for me to address you here, in the capital of one of the greatest friends of Somalia and the Somali people. As I speak today, Kenya, despite the suffering of her own population, has proven to be a refuge for hundreds of thousands of my countrymen and women fleeing the chaos and anarchy of the last two decades, and more recently, the famine which is inexorably spreading over the south of the country. We in Somalia are supremely grateful for this unparalleled act of generosity. We are similarly thankful for the role that Kenya has historically played – and continues to play- in the search for peace and stability not only in Somalia, but across the region. We have neither forgotten that it is your facilitation and hospitality that enabled rival Somali groups to negotiate and develop the transitional structures, nor that it is from here that these set out to establish a governmental presence first in Baidoa and then in Mogadishu. As a result, earlier this week, we were able to adopt a Roadmap for ending the transition to permanent, democratic government.

I also wish to thank the Kenya Government for hosting this Summit. The theme is particularly apt, recognizing, as it does, that the problems we face now are regional in nature and require a comprehensive and regional approach to achieving the short term goal of providing humanitarian relief and tackling the longer term causes of instability, hunger and famine. As you are all doubtlessly aware, the United Nations has announced that the famine has now spread to a sixth region in Somalia, Bay, threatening the lives of over 4 million, or half the country's population. This tragedy is not, however, confined within our borders but is enveloping the wider region. While its effects have been felt hardest inside Somalia, we must remember the millions in Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea and Uganda that are also suffering and in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. No single African country is able to resolve this on its own and what happens in one nation will inevitably affect the rest.

Consider for example, the Al Qaeda affiliated extremist group, Al Shabaab, which is primarily responsible for the famine in Somalia through its policies of systematically looting grain stores; forcible recruitment of and extortion from farmers and their families; and preventing access to the most affected regions in the south to aid agencies. The group has also sought to export its noxious extremism to the rest of the region, recruiting and sponsoring acts of terror here in Kenya and in neighbouring countries such as Uganda, where last year they murdered 76 innocent people. The insecurity the group has created in the south of Somalia has led to a large influx of refugees into Kenya and Ethiopia,

straining resources and spreading instability across the region. It is therefore clear that conflict, hunger and instability in one country has an impact across the entire region.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today it is my intention to update you on the measures we as a government have been taking to ameliorate the situation in Somalia, both in the short and long term, and to offer a few thoughts on initiatives that we as a region can adopt so that the specter of insecurity, hunger and famine is banished from the Horn.

With half the Somali population facing the prospect of starvation, our foremost priority has been the provision of emergency humanitarian to the millions seeking refuge in Mogadishu. To enable this, it was vital that the capital be secured and in this respect the 6th of August 2011 will be remembered as a historic day for Somalia. On that day, the Somali National Army with the support of African Union forces compelled the extremists to withdraw the bulk of their forces from Mogadishu. For the first time in many years, residents in the capital can now enjoy a measure of peace and stability. This success has created new opportunities for stabilizing the city and reaching some of the most vulnerable.

My government is doing the best it can within our limited resources to exploit these opportunities. Immediately following the extremists' retreat, a ministerial committee was set up, which visited vacated areas and came up with strategies for dealing with the situation. The immediate concern was to re-establish security. A state of emergency has been declared in these districts as well as in IDP camps across the city in order to prevent any crime as well as to prevent the return of warlords or militias.

The Cabinet has established two task forces, one with the responsibility to provide armed escort to humanitarian convoys, and a mobile patrol unit to tackle crime. District Security Committees have been established in all 16 districts of the city and are engaging local communities to determine their priorities and needs. The security forces continue to search for weapons and booby traps in the neighborhoods formerly occupied by the extremists and, once these have been cleared, citizens are allowed back into their homes. As a result of the improved security, two of the most crucial markets in the city, Bakara and Suuq Ba'ad, are now reopening.

As the crisis broke, a high level cabinet committee was set up to oversee the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the population. As per its recommendations, the government has set aside several locations in the capital and established camps to house the desperate families streaming into the capital each day. The largest of these, the Badbaado and Rajo camps are each sheltering and feeding tens of thousands of people. A Disaster Management Agency, comprising members of civil society has also been set up and we are working with UN agencies such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme to synchronize our efforts to deal with the famine.

On behalf of the entire Somali nation, I wish to express my gratitude for the pledges of assistance that have been received from governments and humanitarian agencies around the world. We are especially indebted to the governments of Turkey, Djibouti, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, other government and the United Nations and its agencies, which have so far delivered tons of food to Mogadishu and other areas. Coupled with our measures to ensure security, these deliveries have had a considerable impact in Mogadishu and the surrounding areas. According to the latest report by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit, cereal prices for August in the Banadir region, though still unacceptably high, have come down by up to 20 percent compared to previous months.

My government will continue to work closely with them to collect and share information on needs, responses and gap. Indeed, we stand ready to cooperate with all actors to ensure aid reaches the most critically affected populations wherever they may be.

The greatest need continues to be felt within areas still under the effective control of the extremists, where access by international humanitarian agencies is severely restricted. The insurgents are also hampering the freedom of movement of millions who are trying to reach help either in Mogadishu or in neighbouring countries. Without urgent interventions to change this situation, the UN estimates that up to three-quarters of a million people may perish in the next few months. It is therefore critical that the international community reinforces our efforts to extend the zone of safety beyond Mogadishu and into these areas.

Going forward, a principal focus of my government will be to promote peace and reconciliation as well as to reach out to all regions and segments of the population. In this regard, we are building strong working relations between the Federal Government and Regional Administrations such as Puntland and Galmuudug. A memorandum of understanding has recently been signed with the President of Puntland, which will help develop the relationship further.

The High Level Consultative Meeting that has just concluded in Mogadishu has inaugurated a new era for Somali politics. Participants agreed a roadmap for the next 12 months and I have every confidence that the commitments undertaken during the meeting will be speedily implemented. One of the stops along the way will be the successful adoption of a new constitution. A Draft Constitution has already been published and after consulting with the public, an amended draft will be prepared and offered to the nation for adoption.

Ladies and gentlemen

Somalia has taken great steps on the road to lasting peace. But, as noted earlier, no nation can do this by itself. Though we are grateful for the support of fellow African countries within the AU and that of the international community at large, more in terms of men and equipment will be required if we are to completely eliminate the extremist threat. As a region, we cannot afford the luxury of allowing Al Qaeda an opportunity to establish a firm presence in the Horn.

It is therefore all the more important that we develop modalities for the coordination and the exchange of information between our national security and intelligence agencies. We should consider establishing a joint security committee, within the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, comprising representatives of the nations in the region so we can better co-ordinate our counter-terrorism efforts.

In the long term, the solution to preventing the recurrence of famine lies in the sustainable development of the drought-prone regions. This will require long-term investment in many areas including security, health, education and infrastructure, so the people in these areas have the opportunity to engage in productive economic activity and uplift living standards for themselves and their families. The integration of economies on the Horn will be an invaluable step in spreading the fruits of development and securing the future, In this regard, Somalia has much to offer. With the longest coastline on the continent, its unexploited natural wealth and an entrepreneurial tradition that dates back to the Roman times, a peaceful Somalia would be an engine of growth and prosperity for the region and for the continent.

In conclusion, let me quote the words of that great statesman, Winston Churchill, during his 1946 commencement address at Westminster College: "There is enough for all. The earth is a generous mother; she will provide in plentiful abundance food for all her children if they will but cultivate her soil

in justice and peace." The sentiment is as true today as it was 65 years ago. A window of opportunity now exists to not only deal with the present crisis, but to put the Horn of Africa firmly on the path to stability and prosperity. If we work together I am confident that the nations represented here will overcome the challenges of the present and secure the region's future.

Thank You,

