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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
337TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
11 OCTOBER 2012

PSC/PR/COMM(CCCXXXVII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 337th meeting held on 11 October 2012, was briefed on the latest developments in Somalia by the Commissioner for Peace and Security and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Somalia. Council also listened to presentations by the representatives of Somalia, as well as Ethiopia, as chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Council noted with satisfaction the remarkable progress made in Somalia over the past few months. In this regard, Council commended the Somali people and stakeholders for having successfully completed the Transition, with the election of a new Federal Parliament and a new President. Council welcomed the appointment by the President of a new Prime Minister, and looked forward to the early formation of an inclusive and competent cabinet, including a fair gender balance, to steer Somalia forward in the post-transition period.

Council also paid tribute to the Somali National Security Forces (NSF) and the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for the significant gains achieved on the ground, noting that all major and strategic cities in Somalia, especially Mogadishu, Afgowe, Baidoa, Marka and Kismayo, are now under the control of the NSF and AMISOM. Council also reiterated its appreciation to the Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) for their commitment to the promotion of lasting peace, security and reconciliation in Somalia. Council noted with satisfaction that AMISOM was about to reach its UN Security Council authorized-strength of 17,731 uniformed personnel.

Council applauded IGAD for its unwavering commitment to the quest for peace, security and reconciliation in Somalia. In particular, Council paid tribute to the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi for his tireless efforts as Chair of IGAD. Council welcomed the communiqué of the meeting of Ambassadors of IGAD Member States held in Addis Ababa, on 5 October 2012. Council expressed its appreciation to the United Nations, the European Union and its Member States, the League of Arab States, the US and other AU partners for their support to AMISOM and the political process in Somalia.

Council stressed that, while tremendous progress has been recorded, the tasks ahead, as will be defined by the Somali Government, will be even more demanding and complex. Accordingly, Council urged the Somali stakeholders to remain steadfast and to continue to put the interest of their country above any other consideration.

Council underlined the need for the international community to remain actively engaged and to extend greater support to Somalia, on the basis of the priorities defined by the Somali Government.

In this regard, Council called for urgent steps to be taken to restructure and empower the Somali Defense and Security Sector, including through the supply of stipends, equipments and weapons within a transparent and orderly framework, including the lifting of the arms embargo as it relates to the NSF, while maintaining it against non-state actors.

Council called on the UN Peace-building Commission to take steps to contribute actively to post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts in Somalia. Council also stressed the timeliness and appropriateness of the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) and the need to extend the Initiative to Somalia for the benefit of its people.

Council welcomed the growing trend of the surrender of hundreds of armed Al Shabaab elements to the Government forces and to AMISOM, and called for financial resources to be made available to meet the immediate needs of those individuals as a first step towards a comprehensive DDR process.

Council expressed concern at the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country and called for an enhancement of the humanitarian assistance to the needy civilian population taking advantage of the overall improvement of the security situation in the country.

Council expressed full support to the decision of the Commission to undertake, from October 2012 to January 2013, a strategic review of AMISOM and the implementation of its mandate, with a view to determining how best the Mission can further contribute to the stabilization of Somalia and the successful implementation of the priorities set by the Somali Government, in close coordination with an empowered and restructured National Somali Defense and Security Sector.

In the meantime, Council, as already communicated by the Commission to the UN, requested the Security Council to authorize a four-month technical roll over of the UN support package, as provided for by resolution 2036 (2012) of 22 February 2012, with the inclusion of additional support regarding the civilian and maritime components of the Mission, to take into account urgent needs arising from the realities on the ground. Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission to ensure the necessary follow-up with the UN Secretariat and Security Council.

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