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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Tirumurti	(India)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Estonia	Mr. Lipand
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya	Mr. Kimani
	Mexico	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
	Niger	Mr. Abarry
	Norway	Mr. Kvalheim
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. DeShong
	Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mr. Mills
	Viet Nam	Mr. Pham

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2021/723)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2021/723)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in the meeting: Mr. James Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia; Mr. Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia; and Ms. Batula Sheikh Axmed Gaballe, Chairperson of the Somali National Women's Organization.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2021/723, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Swan.

Mr. Swan: I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to brief the Council on the situation in Somalia. I am pleased to do so together, once again, with the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Francisco Madeira. This underscores the importance of the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union in advancing peace, security and stability in Somalia. I am also pleased to be briefing alongside Ambassador Abukar Osman, the Permanent Representative of Somalia to the United Nations, and Ms. Batula Axmed Gaballe, Chairperson of the recently appointed advocacy committee.

My last briefing to the Council (see S/PV.8779) took place two days before the signing of the 27 May electoral implementation agreement between Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble and leaders of the

federal member states. I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made since then.

The Prime Minister has demonstrated strong leadership and initiative in moving the process forward. The National Consultative Council, which includes the Prime Minister and the federal member state leaders, has held regular meetings and dialogue on key issues related to the implementation of the agreement.

Further, election management bodies at federal and state levels have been established, and the elections for seats in the Upper House of Parliament have begun in four of the federal member states. The mandated ministerial committee, comprised of federal member state representatives, has held consultations in Garbahaarrey to prepare for the Gedo elections. The national electoral security committee has been established and has begun preparations, and the Prime Minister has appointed an advocacy committee, whose Chairperson will brief the Council today, to attain the women's 30-per cent quota in the 2021 federal elections of Somalia.

At the same time, more progress is needed in certain priority areas. This includes more intensive and detailed preparations for electoral security, and clarity on plans to secure the quota for women. I am particularly concerned that unless strong measures are put in place now, the women's quota might not be achieved. There is also a need for greater inclusion of youth and historically marginalized communities in the electoral process.

The United Nations has been working closely with the Office of the Prime Minister and the election management committees at the federal and state levels on the implementation of the 27 May agreement and election preparations. This includes the provision of technical and logistical support, as well as the coordination of international financial assistance. Recently, an agreement was signed with the Office of the Prime Minister to ensure that donor funds generously contributed by Member States are available for use by the electoral management bodies.

As future challenges to the implementation of the agreement and the completion of the electoral process emerge, we urge that they continue to be addressed and resolved through dialogue.

Beyond the electoral process, the United Nations continues to support broader peacebuilding efforts,

including strengthening federalism, conflict prevention and management, and peace consolidation. In this regard, we recall that the 27 May agreement includes a road map for the completion of the State-building process in Somalia, and we look forward to supporting its implementation.

With funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Nations in Somalia will also step up its support for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the role of women in peacebuilding through a new programme to address systemic barriers to Somali women's representation and participation in public life.

Preparations for election security are key owing to the continuing threat posed by Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab continues with terrorist attacks and insurgent operations, including by encircling communities, especially so in South-West State.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSAM) has so far in 2021 recorded reports of 708 Somali civilian casualties — 321 killed, 387 injured — mostly attributed to Al-Shabaab. There are also alarming increases in sexual violence and violations against children being recorded, which remain priority areas of concern for the United Nations.

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) continues to play a critical role in Somalia. I pay tribute to all AMISOM and Somali security forces personnel, who work together on a daily basis to bring security to the country. Too many have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSO) continues to provide vital support to AMISOM and the Somali security forces. UNSO assistance to the Somali National Army and Somali Police Force is made possible by voluntary trust fund contributions. Additional generous contributions are urgently needed to continue that vital support to the Somali security forces mandated by the Council.

The Somali transition plan continues to be implemented. However, some goals for 2021 have yet to be achieved, including consolidation in Lower Shabelle and further gains in Hirshabelle State. We note, however, the recent Somali National Army operations to counter Al-Shabaab in Hirshabelle and Galmudug States.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains dire. The combined impact of conflict and climate change, including recurrent droughts and floods, as well as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), is likely to

further exacerbate food insecurity. I would like to note the leadership of the Federal Government of Somalia in rolling out a national vaccination campaign with the support of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility initiative.

Humanitarian access and significantly more funding are required to continue to deliver life-saving support. The 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan is only 38 per cent funded.

Climate change is contributing to the extreme crisis in Somalia, with potential negative effects on stability and security as well as on the humanitarian and development situation. The Council has recognized the adverse effects of climate change on Somalia, and the United Nations continues to work at the Federal Government and federal member state levels to better understand, mitigate and manage that situation.

In conclusion, following a prolonged period of uncertainty and heightened tensions, the long-awaited electoral process in Somalia is now moving forward, albeit somewhat behind schedule. Ensuring that the process continues to advance and is inclusive and credible will require constant effort by all parties involved and continued leadership by the signatories to the 27 May Agreement.

The United Nations stands ready to continue to support Somalia in this election process and beyond so that the country can renew its focus on core peace, security and development goals.

The President: I thank Mr. Swan for his very detailed and comprehensive briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Madeira.

Mr. Madeira: I thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to brief the Security Council on the situation in Somalia once again. Of course, it is with great pleasure that I join my good friend Ambassador Swan in this briefing.

Today I am pleased, as he is, to report that the political stalemate that we witnessed over the past several months has been replaced with positive developments in Somalia. Somali leaders are enhancing their focus on the issues that unite them and speaking with one voice on elections. As is already history, on 27 May, after Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble convened a weeklong National Consultative Council summit, Somali leaders announced that they had reached an

agreement on the modalities for the implementation of the 17 September agreement and the Baidoa technical committee proposals.

It was with great pleasure that we witnessed the start of the process, with the election of some of the members of the Upper House for Jubaland, South-West, Puntland and Galmudug federal member states. We commend the Somali leaders on those very important milestones.

While acknowledging the delays in kick-starting the elections, the African Union is encouraged by the efforts that have gone into their preparation. That includes the work of the Federal Elections Implementation Team, working in close cooperation with the Office of the Prime Minister. We have also seen progress with the federal member states ministerial committee on the Garbahaarrey reconciliation and equally welcomed the appointment of goodwill ambassadors to promote the women's 30 per cent quota, an important issue championed by the African Union Commission.

Similarly, in a continued effort at reconciliation and national unity, the Federal Government and federal member states leaders have not relented on their meetings since the 27 May agreement, regularly convening both presential and virtual National Consultative Council summits. I am encouraged by the fact that those sustained discussions are contributing to enhancing good faith. They have seen the leaders recommit to the national agenda and to holding a trusted electoral process without further delay.

Regarding the contribution of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to the ongoing elections, we remain committed to supporting Somalia, as stipulated in African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué 978 of 2021. As such, under the new African Union Department for Political Affairs, Peace and Security strategic pillars, our election support now extends beyond security to include the provision of capacity-building, technical advisory functions and direct budgetary support.

Since my most recent briefing (see S/PV.8779), our civilian staff have increased their capacity-building and advocacy engagement with local communities and civil-society organizations, including women's and youth organizations across Somalia, with the aim of ensuring their participation in the elections. At the request of the Federal Elections Implementation Team, we will be deploying African Union-rostered election

experts in the coming days. I am also pleased to report that in line with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the African Union has approved Somalia's request for budgetary support for its elections. Beyond that support, I can report that the African Union Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, will be donating equipment to the Team to complement and expand its capacity to deliver on the elections.

African Union Peace and Security Council communiqué 978 of this year highlights AMISOM's role in election security, particularly with regard to providing support to the Federal Government and the federal member states.

In that context, I am grateful for the contribution of the AMISOM police and the Somali Police Force in enhancing security around Djihunga and providing Somali leaders with a conducive security environment during the consultations that led to the 27 May agreement. More recently, in Kismaayo and Baidoa, the AMISOM police supported their Somali Police Force colleagues in securing the elections for the initial seats for the Upper House. Together, in June, they conducted joint security assessment missions in Garbahaarrey and South-West's South Galkayo, and they returned to Galkayo and Garbahaarrey this week to complete urgent security measures, which will be presented to the newly created national electoral security committee, chaired by the Prime Minister. Elsewhere, across Jubaland and South-West, the AMISOM police continue to support the capacity-building of the state police on key election-related courses, such as counter-terrorism during the elections and election security management, while in Mogadishu we have provided training on community policing during elections.

With the elections being in the early phase, we are in a critical period in Somalia, where our collective focus must be to prevent Al-Shabaab from disrupting the ongoing electoral process. In the period under review, Al-Shabaab demonstrated continued resilience, employing sinister tactics, both in Mogadishu and beyond, in AMISOM's area of operations. We continue to observe the use of indirect fire, with Al-Shabaab modifying its mortars for maximum deadly impact, as seen recently in July against AMISOM's base in Mogadishu.

In addition, in an attempt to disrupt the elections we have uncovered the groups carrying out

kidnappings, public executions and assassinations. I am also concerned over reports of Al-Shabaab using intimidation tactics against local elders, urging them to refrain from participating in the elections.

To mitigate and disrupt Al-Shabaab's election plans, AMISOM has taken urgent and immediate steps. Some such steps include maintaining vigilance at all our forward operating bases and enhancing the protection of very important persons, increasing our intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance coverage, enhancing joint operations with our mobile forces and enhancing our main-supply-route patrols.

We continue to see some progress in the implementation of the Somali transition plan, but equally the continuation of joint offensive and targeted operations. Key operations were AMISOM's support to the Somali security forces in Biyo-Cadale, Balad and Bulo Burti in Juba and in Shabelle, while this August, we have jointly conducted operations in Wajid in South-West. In addition, AMISOM's presence across its sectors has allowed for the prioritization of the main population centres. That has resulted in the Somali security forces being free and able to conduct independent operations. I commend and encourage such operations, as they demonstrate the increase in capacity of the Somali security forces to take over security responsibilities and to effectively strike Al-Shabaab.

With regard to mentoring in Mogadishu, the Somali National Army (SNA) deployed a SNA liaison officer to act as an adviser to AMISOM's Force Commander. Recently, a team of SNA staff officers completed a mentoring programme facilitated by AMISOM, with the focus on intelligence collection and communication. In line with resolution 2568 (2021), together with the SNA, we are making progress on our reconfiguration plans. To implement that key task, both AMISOM and the SNA harmonized their operational plans, with increasing results. I can report that we have now established joint operations coordination centres across all AMISOM sectors. Those Joint Operations Centres are now in the process of being equipped and will soon be fully operational.

The African Union remains committed to contributing to the strengthening of the capacity of Somalia's security institutions. We view that as the only way for Somalia to sustainably take control of the security of its own country. It is for that reason that we have actively supported and continue to implement the

revised Somali transition plan. In that regard, we take note of the Federal Government's Somali transition plan progress report, shared with the international partners in July. Although the Somali transition plan progress report identifies the key achievements and outputs recorded from January to June, we would have liked the report to include more details on the activities and achievements of AMISOM's uniformed personnel in implementing the Somali transition plan.

I want to note that such an inclusion would highlight the spirit of cooperation that exists between the Somali security forces and the AMISOM uniformed personnel. As we continue to update the Somali transition plan progress report through consultations ahead of its final submission to the Security Council in October, we look forward to the upcoming high-level Security and Justice Committee meeting. It is our belief that that high-level meeting will allow us to share our harmonized plans on how to continue to support the Somali forces to extend security control across the country and the resources and assistance that would be required from key partners, including the African Union itself.

Over the past 14 years, Somalia has witnessed significant progress in the establishment of security and other State institutions throughout the country. That has been achieved thanks to the Somali-led efforts, combined with the courage and sacrifice of AMISOM personnel, supported by its international partners. Those joint efforts have led to two successive peaceful transfers of power in the elections of 2012 and 2016 — a task that we are now repeating this year. We have also continued to degrade Al-Shabaab since 2007, creating the necessary political space for progress on reconciliation, State-building and peacebuilding to take place.

However, with those achievements and, more importantly, the growing capacity of the Somali security institutions to take the lead, we must now build a consensus on the African Union's future engagement in Somalia post-2021. In that context, the African Union undertook an independent assessment. Its conclusions have been considered by both AMISOM itself and some troop-contributing countries, the African Union Commission and, on 30 July, the African Union Peace and Security Council. They have all looked into that report by those independent assessors. The overriding consensus was in favour of a joint African Union-United Nations multidimensional stabilization mission or hybrid mission as the model that would be

best placed to address the challenges that a new African Union mission would encounter post-2021.

We at AMISOM further believe that while the United Nations-led independent assessment calls for a reconfigured AMISOM post-2021, any final consideration must consider three key issues.

The first is ownership. Any future mission in Somalia must continue to operate with full respect for Somali sovereignty and leadership in all spheres, more specifically in the areas of stabilization, peacebuilding and State-building. That remains important, as it will allow the African Union to continue working in partnership with Somali stakeholders to support nationally owned strategies and frameworks as Somalia begins to plan for its next election cycle, in 2025-2026.

While over the years we have seen many gains, both political and security challenges lie ahead for Somalia. Addressing those challenges will require continued leadership, outreach and reconciliation. One of the most important conclusions emerging from the seminal report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations of 2015 (see S/2015/446) was its emphasis on the primacy of politics in the ultimate success of peace operations. That is no less the case in relation to AMISOM. In supporting Somalia to meet its challenges, including in the successful implementation of the Somali transition plan, the African Union must be able to ensure that its security efforts are buttressed by a meaningful role in delivering the necessary political processes that underpin the security architecture necessary for the full takeover of security responsibilities by the Somali security forces. To that end, any African Union mission must retain a flexible posture, allowing it to deliver on new and emerging priorities. That will also require an African Union presence, in particular its civilian component, in order to have more specialized experts deployed across Somalia, reflecting Somalia's federal nature.

The second is partnership. As the African Union seeks to move to a new phase of its presence in Somalia, focusing on support for stabilization, institution-building, deradicalization and post-conflict reconstruction and a more defined political role, it will be seeking to renew its strategic partnerships. In that regard, there can be no stronger partners than the European Union and the United Nations.

We recognize and appreciate the European Union's continued financial support for AMISOM since its

deployment in Somalia, and we also acknowledge the constraints to continued support occasioned by competing priorities for funds in a global economy depressed by the coronavirus disease pandemic and the attendant economic downturns. Despite those constraints, the African Union is clear that any future African Union presence in Somalia must be assured of sustainable and predictable funding.

Regarding the United Nations, our partnership must remain at the centre of international engagement with Somalia. For that reason, as the African Union's presence begins to evolve, the renewal of resolution 2540 (2020) should benefit from a radical reassessment undertaken jointly by the Federal Government, the African Union, the United Nations and key international partners. Additionally, an appraisal should be considered of the prioritization and sequencing of its mandated tasks that must be aligned with the new realities emerging in Somalia beginning in 2022.

Let me conclude on another positive note and welcome the series of important measures that we have witnessed being taken by Kenya and Somalia since June. Those developments remain significant in strengthening the relations of the two neighbours and will continue to create the conditions for the building of a regional political consensus originally forged after the deployment of AMISOM, in 2007.

The President: I thank Mr. Madeira for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Gaballe.

Ms. Gaballe: I thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to provide an update on the political and electoral development in Somalia from a civil-society perspective.

My name is Batula Axmed. I am an advocate of women's rights and empowerment, peace and political participation. Today I am speaking in my capacity as the Chairperson of the Somali National Women's Organization, as well as the Chairperson of the recently appointed advocacy committee for the attainment of the women's 30 per cent quota in the 2021 federal elections of Somalia, commonly known as goodwill ambassadors.

In addition to a general update, my statement will address the interconnectedness and the impact of the political crisis on women's participation and representation in decision-making and leadership, including the electoral process; the role of Somali women in the current elections and the challenges

facing aspiring women candidates; the aspirations of Somali women and ways to realize them; the role of the Federal Government of Somalia and its international partners, including the United Nations, in advancing women's political participation and representation; and the women and peace and security agenda in general.

With regard to the Houses of Parliament, the 17 September 2020 agreement provided no details on how the commitment to safeguarding the 30 per cent quota would be implemented. It provided women leaders and candidates no guarantee of their representation and participation in the elections and in the eleventh session of Parliament. We remain deeply concerned over the uncertainty in that respect while continuing advocacy campaigns for a clear mechanism to deliver on the 30 per cent quota.

The political stalemate in the electoral process continued to affect the concerns of women. The delays in the implementation of the electoral processes, due mainly to political disagreements among the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member state leaders, also increased women's anxiety that women's issues and concerns would no longer remain a priority.

The 30 per cent quota seemed to have disappeared from the agenda of political leaders who make decisions on the electoral process. Due to political uncertainties and the fear of escalation of political crisis, even we, women leaders, got engaged in campaigning for peace and reconciliation. We took on our peacemakers' role, leaving the demand for the 30 per cent quota to the side. We realized that without agreement between the Federal Government of Somali and federal member state leaders and without political stability, there will be no elections; and without elections, there will be no 30 per cent quota.

Women leaders across the country were further concerned about the fact that political solutions needed to be found to overcome political differences between the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member state leaders in order to avoid a further escalation of the situation, which would lead the country towards the path of instability. If that were to happen, peace would remain an ever elusive agenda. Women therefore prioritized peace and stability over the 30 per cent quota.

During the May National Consultative Council, women leaders, led by the untiring Federal Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, engaged the political leadership separately to secure their

commitment to attaining the 30 per cent quota. Our demands were clear: first, the issuance of a concrete mechanism to implement the 30 per cent quota; secondly, the reduction of candidate registration fees for women; and, thirdly, reserving seats for women only, to guarantee a minimum of 30 per cent representation of women in the new Parliament. At the May Council, political leaders assured us of their commitment and support for the 30 per cent quota.

Although women secured a 50 per cent reduction in fees, in the absence of a clear mechanism, the most critical of all demands, the path to the attainment of the 30 per cent quota, remains elusive and challenging. Moreover, Somali women leaders and civil society organizations have advocated for the 30 per cent quota with very little or no resources. There is an urgent need to engage federal member state leaders and clan elders to reach an understanding to set aside 30 per cent of the seats to be contested only by women.

The establishment of the advocacy committee by the Prime Minister on 25 July, of which I have been made Chairperson, is a development we welcome. The appointment of the Committee provides new impetus to women's advocacy for the 30 per cent quota.

The election in the Upper House is under way. As of now, no State has delivered 30 per cent in the elections. Women's representation varies between 25 per cent to 27 per cent, and Jubaland is yet to elect women. We are mindful of the challenges and remain clear in our resolve to fulfil our mandate. The members of the Committee are fully engaged. I would like to take this moment to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Office of the Prime Minister and the international community, in particular the United Kingdom, the European Union and the United Nations, for facilitating our work. We are confident that our international partners will accompany us on this journey.

Besides financial constraints, women candidates face challenges of insecurity and fear of intimidation. Strengthening protection is critical to ensuring women's participation in the electoral process. As we continue our efforts to realize a minimum of 30 per cent representation of women in the new Parliament, we are looking ahead and beyond the 2021 election. To avoid a repeat of what Somali women are experiencing today and to secure Somali women's rightful place in the political arena, we demand a level playing field.

The new Government and the new Parliament must work together to amend the federal electoral law and political party laws, thereby ensuring clear provisions for women's full participation. The constitutional review must provide clear provisions on women's participation in politics and public offices. Resources must be provided to strengthen women's leadership role and protection. Support must be extended to newly elected women Members of Parliament and Senators to be effective in their legislative role.

Somali women represent more than 50 per cent of the population and they cannot be excluded from political and decision-making roles. In other words, women's meaningful participation is vital for the attainment of durable peace, security and political stability in Somalia. Alongside the Somali authorities, the international community, particularly the United Nations, has a major responsibility to ensure that political dialogues, reconciliation efforts and development efforts are inclusive. Women's participation and protection from all forms of violence, including sexual violence in conflict and discrimination, must be a priority.

In conclusion, we demand concrete measures and full accountability for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. On behalf my fellow Somali women and on my personal behalf, I would like to extend to you, Mr. President and the Council, Special Representative James Swan, Special Representative Francisco Madeira, our sincere thanks and appreciation for this opportunity and continued support to Somalia and the Somali women's cause.

The President: I thank Ms. Gaballe for her briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Special Representative Swan, Special Representative Madeira and Ms. Batula Axmed Gaballe for their briefings.

I would like to make three points in response to what we have heard today. The first thing to say is that the United Kingdom welcomes the electoral agreement reached between the Somali Federal Government and Somalia's federated member states on 27 May. Prime Minister Roble has our full support as he works with the federal member states to implement the agreement and conclude the electoral process as planned. It follows that

we welcome the beginning of Upper House elections as a milestone in the process agreed on 27 May.

But we also endorse what we have heard from Special Representative of the Secretary-General Swan, namely, the importance of the engagement of Somalia's leaders to keep this process on track and to ensure that the 30 per cent quota for women is met. We also encourage the Somali authorities, in close coordination with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), to accelerate preparations for election security. We say this because we know, as we heard from Special Representative Madeira, delays and deviation from this process risk further political division and benefit to Al-Shabaab, which continues to launch frequent attacks to regain ground, extort income and increase their political influence.

Secondly, with regard to security, the electoral process is a key part of sustaining the security gains that the African Union and AMISOM have helped to achieve. In support of the transition to a Somali-led security arrangement as laid out in the Somali transition plan and called for in resolution 2568 (2021), we support and encourage collaboration and consultation between the Federal Government of Somalia, the United Nations, the African Union (AU) and donors. Further, we look forward to the joint United Nations-African Union proposal on the successor mission to AMISOM, which we expect to see in September, and to working with Somalia, the AU and Security Council members to translate this proposal into a mandate in December.

Thirdly, as we have heard, Somalia continues to face deep challenges brought about by coronavirus disease and climate change, including flooding, drought and locust swarms, which have put Somali lives and livelihoods at further risk. The United Kingdom will continue to support Somalia in mitigating the impacts of these events and in building resilience, and we call on other members of the international community to do the same.

In conclusion, delivering on the 27 May agreement and completing the electoral process will present Somalia with an opportunity to address the challenges facing Somali people and for regional and international partners to renew their support to Somalia, particularly on its path to development, security and climate resilience.

Mr. Pham (Viet Nam): I would like to thank Special Representative James Swan, Special Representative

Francisco Madeira and Ms. Batula Axmed Gaballe for their insightful briefings and for their work on the ground. I would like also to welcome the participation of Ambassador Abukar Dahir Osman, Permanent Representative of Somalia, at today's meeting.

We are encouraged by recent positive developments in Somalia, particularly by the agreement reached in late May by the National Consultative Council (NCC) and the continued dialogue between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federated member states on the implementation of the electoral process with a view to ending the political impasse that has been in place since 2018. Against this backdrop, I would like to highlight the following points.

First, the agreement reached by the NCC on the main issues in relation to the election process is an important milestone. It not only removed a major roadblock to elections, but also showed that all parties could work together in the interests of the country. We hope that the election will be implemented in a secure and peaceful manner, based on an agreed timetable. Furthermore, the implementation of a Somali-owned and Somali-led political process should take into account the legitimate aspiration of all Somali stakeholders. Adequate representation of women, minorities and youth should also be ensured.

We would also like to reiterate the need for continued international support in financial and technical assistance and in State-building efforts, including the strengthening of State institutions. Long-term peace and prosperity in Somalia depend on it. It is also important to create a favourable environment and step up protection measures for civilians, including in electoral preparation and polls, especially for vulnerable groups, women and children.

Secondly, the continuing volatile security situation remains a concern. Terrorist groups, including Al-Shabaab, continue to demonstrate their ability to conduct attacks, including through using improvised explosive devices and high-profile suicide attacks. We strongly condemn the violence and terrorist attacks against civilians, Government officials, the Somali security forces, United Nations personnel and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

We support the operations carried out by the Somali security forces, AMISOM and international partners against Al-Shabaab and urge the Government of Somalia to redouble its efforts aimed at carrying

out security measures for civilian protection and accelerating investigation into the violence against and killings of civilians. In this regard, support for the Somali army and security forces remains critical through training, provision of equipment, capacity-building and implementing operations against Al-Shabaab.

Thirdly, the coronavirus disease pandemic, desert locusts, flood and drought have resulted in increased displacement and negatively affected large segments of the population that were already vulnerable and in need of humanitarian assistance owing to chronic poverty and conflict. We cannot emphasize enough the need to address these challenges and economic issues facing Somalia, especially in terms of agricultural development. In this regard, it is concerning to note the low level of funding that there has been for the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia. We call on international partners to galvanize further support to assist the Federal Government of Somalia in alleviating socioeconomic hardships. At the same time, only through a comprehensive approach can the Government and the people of Somalia overcome long-term challenges and achieve sustained stability and development.

Last but not least, we would like to reiterate the importance of assistance from and coordination with regional and international partners working on the ground. We commend the recent efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, AMISOM, the United Nations country team and the Special Representative in their continued assistance to Somalia with a view to ensuring lasting peace, stability and development for the country and its people.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council — Kenya, the Niger and Tunisia — as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1).

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), Mr. James Swan, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Mr. Francisco Madeira, and the Chairperson of the Somali National Women's Organization, Ms. Batula Axmed Gaballe, for their briefings. We would also like to welcome participation of the Permanent Representative of Somalia in today's meeting.

The A3+1 welcomes the commencement of the election process following the agreement reached between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federated member states on the remaining organizational issues. We underline again the vital importance of holding free, fair, inclusive and timely elections to realize the Somali people's legitimate aspirations to security, stability, democracy, good governance and development.

The A3+1 welcomes continued efforts aimed at realizing the agreed 30 per cent quota for women, including the reduction of nomination fees for women candidates and the appointment of goodwill ambassadors. We also reiterate our support for the objective of holding one-person one-vote universal elections in 2024-2025 and encourage the continuation of efforts to that end.

The A3+1 remains concerned about the security situation in Somalia with Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups still representing the major threat to peace, security and stability in the country. We reiterate our call for continued international support to the Government of Somalia in its fight against Al-Shabaab and for capacity-building in order to enable the Government to take full responsibility for its security, in line with the Somalia transition plan.

The A3+1 takes note of the options proposed by the African Union independent assessment on post-2021 engagement in Somalia and of the preference expressed for an African Union/United Nations joint mission. While renewing our tribute to the dedication, courage and sacrifice of AMISOM in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Somalia, we invite the United Nations, the African Union and all international partners to continue working closely with the Government of Somalia to agree on the best way forward.

The A3+1 deplores the civilian casualties recorded in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/723), the large majority of which are attributed to Al-Shabaab. We are deeply concerned about the continued reports of arbitrary detentions, including of journalists, sexual and gender-based violence, and abuses against children. We encourage the Somali authorities to take the necessary steps to prevent these violations and further promote and protect human rights, in particular those of women and children, as well as freedom of speech and access to information.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia also remains deeply concerning, and we reiterate our call to all international partners to scale up funding for the humanitarian response plans for Somalia.

The A3+1 appreciates the efforts of UNSOM⁴ and other relevant stakeholders in discharging the Mission's mandate of supporting Somalia through the provision of policy advice on peacebuilding and State-building and the coordination of international donor support. Those efforts must be buttressed by strong relations between the Federal Government of Somalia, the United Nations and the African Union. The A3+1 therefore reaffirms its readiness to engage constructively in the forthcoming negotiations for the renewal of UNSOM's mandate in order to enhance its role in Somalia following the 2021 elections.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, unity, political independence and territorial integrity of Somalia, as well as our support for all efforts to secure its peace, political stability and socioeconomic progress.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I want to thank this morning's briefers for their invaluable insights. It is great to see the Special Representative Madeira in the Chamber this morning, and I thank him for his insights. I was particularly struck by the heartfelt and sincere presentation of Ms. Batula Sheikh Axmed Gaballe. It is also a pleasure, as always, to see our colleague, Ambassador Swan, here today.

Since our last meeting, I have been encouraged by the step-by-step progress we are seeing now in Somalia towards the implementation of an agreed electoral model. I want to commend the leadership of the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states in setting aside their past differences and working to put the country and the Somali people's interests first. This is the cooperation that we wanted to see, and it is essential for long-term stability in Somalia. It is now critical that Somalia's leaders maintain this positive momentum, resolve outstanding issues in a spirit of consensus and compromise, and move to hold inclusive elections without further delay. This is vital to delivering the demands of the people of Somalia for democracy and to tackle the major challenges the country faces. Time is of the essence.

At this crucial moment for Somalia's political future, it is all the more critical that we see the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the

electoral process. As we heard in the briefings this morning, there are reports that women candidates have been intimidated, harassed, abducted and killed in the past. It is therefore imperative that we all work to ensure the safety and security of women running for office and that we plan for the protection of women during the upcoming elections.

I am very concerned that there is still no established concrete mechanism to ensure the minimum 30 per cent quota for women in the electoral process. I have spoken many times with Foreign Minister Mohamud about this quota; it is not rhetorical. I very much appreciate the Somali Ambassador's personal commitment in that regard, and I know that it was discussed between our Foreign Minister and Minister Mohamud at their recent meeting in Mogadishu. The appointment of goodwill ambassadors, of course, is very welcome, but more is needed to see this commitment translated into practice. It is very disappointing to hear Ms. Gaballe today, when speaking of the mechanism, characterize the situation as elusive and challenging. I reiterate her urgent call for a concrete mechanism to be put in place without further delays. We need to see this commitment translated into practice.

I am also alarmed by the reports of increased conflict-related sexual violence, especially against women and girls, as outlined recently by Special Representatives Patten and Gamba. I have read and listened to those reports in detail and — to put it frankly — they are horrifying. During his recent visit to Mogadishu, Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney heard direct searing testimony from women activists in that regard. The tragic impact of conflict-related sexual violence on these women simply must be addressed. Ms. Gaballe reminded us of that in detail today.

These acts are utterly unacceptable and must cease immediately, whomever the perpetrators. I echo the call by Special Representatives Patten and Gamba for swift adoption of a new national action plan on ending sexual violence in conflict. I welcome the adoption in May of the human rights policy for the Somali National Armed Forces. Even so, I call on all Somali authorities to take immediate steps to protect women and girls from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence including enacting the original 2018 Sexual Offences Bill.

It is also shocking that vulnerable children continue to be killed, abducted and recruited with apparent impunity. The Secretary General's report

(S/2021/723) highlights the alarming scale of ongoing grave violations against the children of Somalia by all parties, including Al-Shabaab, clan militias and Federal Government and federal member state armed forces. I call on all parties to prevent and end all grave violations against children and to hold perpetrators accountable.

The recent political impasse has diverted attention from tackling the serious threat of Al-Shabaab, but we have not looked away. The reality is that Al-Shabaab are the only ones to have gained from this electoral impasse. I condemn in the strongest possible terms their continued attacks on civilians, government officials and security forces.

The distraction of the political impasse has also aggravated the effects of a dire humanitarian crisis in Somalia. The negative impact of climate change and the coronavirus disease pandemic are further exacerbating the serious humanitarian situation and having a disproportionate impact on the vulnerable — as always, women and girls. While international partners need to step up funding and support in Somalia — and in that context it is regrettable to see contributions to the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia at the lowest level in six years — the Government must also refocus on addressing humanitarian access constraints and the fundamental challenges facing the people of Somalia.

In concluding, I wish to touch on the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). As we heard in great detail today in a comprehensive update from Mr. Madeira, the African Union, through AMISOM, plays a major role in promoting peace and security in Somalia. I sincerely commend the bravery and sacrifices made by both AMISOM and the Somali security forces to promote peace in Somalia. As a member of the European Union, which has proudly contributed to AMISOM and Somali security over decades, I want to encourage the Federal Government of Somalia, the United Nations and the African Union to work to follow the timeline set out in resolution 2568 (2021).

For the future security of the people of Somalia, it is absolutely vital to continue to work together towards the progressive transfer of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali security forces. That must happen as soon the security and political situation allows and in a manner that prioritizes the safety and security of all Somali citizens. Finding consensus among all of Somalia's partners and Somali leaders on how best to achieve that is now critical and urgent.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Mr. James Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Mr. Francisco Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), for their traditionally informative briefings.

We also listened carefully to the information provided by the representative of Somali civil society, Ms. Batula Sheikh Axmed Gaballe. We welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Somalia, Abukar Dahir Osman, in this meeting.

We studied the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/723) very carefully. We note that since the previous meeting of the Security Council on this issue (see S/PV.8779), the political forces in Somalia have managed to move forward significantly on a whole slew of issues relating to general elections. The new timetable for the elections has been approved, and the process of Senate elections has begun.

Overall, the easing of political tensions has become possible thanks to the constructive position taken by the central authorities, including the fact that President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed declined to extend his mandate by two years and the reversion to the agreement of 17 September 2020 between the Federal Government and the states on the modalities of the electoral process. We also take note of the contribution to the achieving of mutually acceptable solutions made by Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble.

We call on all political forces in Somalia to continue constructive work so as to implement the 29 June agreements, with the goal of conducting presidential and parliamentary elections as soon as possible and the creation in the country of a resilient federative framework.

We also welcome the contacts between Somalia and Kenya. Like the Secretary-General, we, too, expect that they will result in the full resumption of friendly relations between those two countries, which play a pivotal role in maintaining peace and stability in the region.

The security situation in Somalia remains tense. Al-Shabaab continues to exert increasing pressure on the federal authorities and AMISOM, in the centre of the country as well as in the outlying regions. The fighters

openly threaten those who intend to participate in the elections. We call upon the Government of Somalia and African Union peacekeepers not to relent in their fight against extremists.

In that context, we note the particular importance of the initiative of the federal Security and Justice Committee. The initiative is aimed at implementing the May agreements on preparing, through the efforts of the Federal Government and AMISOM, special police units to ensure safety and security at polling stations.

We continue to believe that the African Union peacekeeping mission remains a key element in Somali security. We expect that the African Union and the federal authorities will work out a mutually acceptable configuration for the future mission and the parameters needed to transfer responsibility for security in the country from AMISOM to the Somali National Army. We are convinced that all decisions in that respect need to be very carefully considered and that a security vacuum must be averted at all costs.

This month the Security Council will be asked to extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM). We advocate the constructive inclusion of UNSOM in the process of State-building in the country on the basis of the agreements reached between the federal authorities and the regions. We see the goal of the draft resolution as sending signals to all key Somali actors that the electoral process needs to be completed, that State-building needs to be intensified and that the fight against the extremist threat needs to continue.

We call upon the United Nations and international and regional partners to continue assisting Somalia while strictly respecting its sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, without any interference in its internal affairs.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like at the outset to thank all the briefers for their enlightening presentations, and I welcome the presence here of the Permanent Representative of Somalia.

I wish first to stress the importance of elections. France hails all efforts made in that regard by the Government of Somalia and the federated states, particularly the mobilization of Prime Minister Roble in those efforts. It encourages the Somali parties to

immediately implement all the commitments that they undertook in September 2020 and May 2021.

I wish also to stress the importance of the inclusivity of the electoral process. The full participation of women as both voters and candidates must remain a priority. The 30 per cent quota must be respected, as noted by Ms. Batula Axmed Gaballe. We also call for young people to participate, in accordance with resolution 2535 (2020), on the youth, peace and security agenda.

Secondly, on security, we deplore the lack of progress in the implementation of the Somali transition process, as Al-Shabaab continues with its deadly attacks. France condemns the acts of violence committed by that group and denounces in particular the resort to sexual violence and forced marriage, which is increasing continually.

We cannot wait. We must today begin the process of a security transition and the handover to the Somali forces. France calls on all parties, particularly Somalia, the African Union and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and its troop-contributing countries to fully implement resolution 2568 (2021) and respect its timetable.

A decision must be taken this year on the evolution of the role and the financing of AMISOM. I would recall that the European Union has spent almost €2 billion on the Mission since 2007. That should translate into greater effectiveness in the work of the Mission and should induce other partners to make early contributions to that joint effort. In that respect, France understands that the European Union will review its contribution to the financing of AMISOM while ensuring a better coordination of the operation with its Common Security and Defence Policy missions deployed in Somalia.

Our duty is also to assist the Somali population. As all are aware, its situation has been aggravated by the coronavirus disease pandemic and extreme climate conditions, be it the impact of climate change or desert locusts. France calls for the ensuring of safe and unhindered humanitarian access and firmly condemns the attacks on humanitarian and health personnel, as well as obstacles to humanitarian access. Those crimes will not remain unpunished and respect for international humanitarian law and human rights is non-negotiable.

France shares the concerns expressed jointly by the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and on Sexual

Violence in Conflict. We encourage Somalia to implement its international and regional commitments by adopting appropriate legislation for the protection of children and for the condemnation of sexual and gender-based violence.

On the eve of the renewal of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, I would like to reiterate our full support for this Mission and its leader, Mr. James Swan, whom I thank for all his efforts and commitment.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. James Swan, and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Mr. Madeira, for their briefings. I also listened carefully to the statement of the civil society representative, Ms. Gaballe. I welcome the Somali representative to today's meeting.

Recently, the political situation in Somalia has in general moved in a positive direction. China welcomes the agreement reached by the Somali parties on electoral arrangements and the official launch of the first round of the Upper House elections. We hope that all parties will commit themselves to maintaining national stability, rebuilding peace, strengthening dialogue and consultation on advancing the electoral process and holding the elections as based on an agreed timetable. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia has played an important role in supporting peace and reconstruction in Somalia. China supports the renewal of its mandate and the continuation of its technical advice and support to Somalia for the smooth conduct of the elections.

China commends the efforts by Somalia and Kenya to improve bilateral relations and hopes that they will continue their contribution to regional peace and stability.

Somalia's security situation is fraught with challenges. It is of concern that Al-Shabaab continues to launch frequent attacks against innocent civilians, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali security forces. China supports AMISOM in its continued coordination and collaboration with the Somali security forces on joint counter-terrorism operations. We hope that the international community will strongly support the Somali Government in security capacity-building, in line with the Somali transition plan. China calls on donors to provide financial support for AMISOM to deliver on its mandate. The United

Nations and the African Union need to strengthen communication and coordination with Somalia in order to reach consensus on the future configuration of AMISOM.

The current humanitarian situation has further deteriorated, compounded by the factors, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the extreme weather and the locust plague. One fifth of its population are food insecure. Humanitarian needs are increasing. The United Nations humanitarian response plan is drastically underfunded. The international community should step up efforts to give full support to Somalia in fighting the pandemic, improve disaster response capacities, provide greater assistance in terms of development aid and debt relief and encourage Somalia to explore a development path that suits its national conditions and enhance its own developing capacity.

China has always supported peace and reconstruction in Somalia. We have helped the country in building infrastructure and economic development capacity and provided multiple batches of anti-pandemic supplies and vaccines. Last week, China held the first meeting of the International Forum on COVID-19 Vaccine Cooperation and announced that China would provide 2 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses to the world this year and donate \$100 million to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility. We stand ready to work with the international community to make a positive contribution to lasting peace and sustainable development in Somalia.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Swan and to our two virtual briefers for their useful, informative presentations. The United States welcomes, as other speakers have, the considerable progress on Somalia's electoral process over the past three months. When the Security Council last convened to discuss Somalia in May (see S/PV.8779), the country was facing its most serious bout of political instability in over 20 years. Since that time, the United States has been very pleased to see the electoral process moving forward.

I want to commend the spirit of cooperation among the Somali Federal Government and the federal member states' leaders on the implementation of the 17 September electoral model that led to the 27 May agreement and the subsequent progress on implementation. In particular, the United States commends Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble for his leadership of the process.

However, notwithstanding the progress achieved thus far, there remain aspects of the process that require continued focus and attention, as Special Representative of the Secretary-General Swan pointed out and our briefers highlighted. For example, when the Upper House elections conclude, stakeholders should expeditiously conduct Lower House elections with a view to carrying out the country's long-delayed presidential election on the announced date of 10 October. That includes completing election security preparations to ensure that voting can take place in a safe and secure environment.

It is also critical to finalize arrangements for meeting the quota pursuant to Somali political agreements of 30 per cent female representation in Parliament. Others have spoken about that; I will not go on at length but let me emphasize that, in Somalia, where women have often been the victims of discrimination and oppression, it is vital that their voices be included in the highest chambers of the Somali Government. The United States wants to commend the work of the goodwill ambassadors and their efforts to further that goal.

The United States remains committed to ensuring that both the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the African Union Mission in Somalia are mandated to provide tailored, appropriate support to the Somali people during this time of political transition. This is a moment of tremendous opportunity for Somalia, and we would urge the Government to do its utmost to adhere to the established electoral timelines, to continue promoting cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states and to closely coordinate with all partners to ensure that those two missions remain fit for purpose.

In conclusion, recent weeks have shown encouraging progress for Somalia's electoral process. The United States commends the work of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Swan and that of the Somali Government, Somali stakeholders and the Somali people, which have brought this about. Despite those encouraging signs, much more work needs to be done, as our briefers emphasized. The United States Government will continue to work with the Council members and Somali leaders to achieve a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Somalia.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful for the briefings by Special Representatives Swan and Madeira, as well as for the

information provided by Ms. Batula Axmed Gaballe. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of Somalia to this meeting.

While noting the delays in the implementation of the electoral agreement, Mexico welcomes the many efforts to address the reluctance of some political actors and to move towards an achievable and realistic electoral timetable. We stress the importance of an inclusive, credible and transparent process, and we acknowledge in particular Prime Minister Roble's direct involvement in high-level contacts and reconciling relations. Despite the challenges, my country believes it particularly positive that the 17 September electoral agreement and the benchmarks of the Baidoa technical committee continue to prevail.

In that context, Mexico emphasizes the importance of meeting the quota of at least 30 per cent women's representation in the electoral process, and we would like to learn more details on the specific mechanisms for its implementation. Ensuring the full involvement of women is about ensuring Somalia's future. It also means ensuring their security in the context of the electoral process.

With regard to the security situation, we reiterate our concern about the threat posed by Al-Shabaab to the Government's control over the entire territory of Somalia, the strengthening of Government institutions and the transition plan.

My country recognizes the progress made in the implementation of the arms-and-ammunition management policy. However, Mexico considers it important to stress that, in addition to the management of weapons already present on Somali territory, a truly effective strategy must take into account the entire life cycle of weapons. This implies shared responsibility among the various actors in the chains of transfer, from producers and exporters to recipients and intermediaries. Only with a comprehensive approach can the proliferation of weapons, which continues to fuel the power of Al-Shabaab, be addressed.

We are also alarmed by the increase in cases of grave violations against children and the high incidence of sexual violence. We echo the call of the Secretary-General and his Special Representatives for the Somali authorities to urgently implement necessary stronger legislation, in particular the 2018 Sexual Offences bill and the action plan against child recruitment, to prevent such violations and ensure that justice is served. We

further call on the parties to the conflict in Somalia to immediately put an end to these violations and comply with their obligations and responsibilities under international humanitarian law and human rights law.

In addition to the complex security context, the impacts of recurrent climate crises, the coronavirus disease pandemic, the locust infestation and growing food insecurity are creating great need for humanitarian assistance. Mexico calls on the entire international community to provide the financial, material and political resources needed to avoid a catastrophe in a country where almost half of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance. While Somalia received its second batch of vaccines through the COVAX facility on 8 August, a sustained and predictable supply is more needed than ever.

In view of the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, Mexico, my country, considers fundamental provisions therein on, first, support for national authorities in the implementation of the transition plan; secondly, protection of human rights, in particular the protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence and the protection of children in armed conflict; thirdly, participation of women in political processes; and fourthly, the adverse effects of climate change and the need to develop measures to mitigate them.

Lastly, we welcome the re-establishment of relations between Kenya and Somalia, whose relationship is vital for the stability of the region. Kenya's support is undoubtedly crucial to the political process and the maintenance of security in Somalia.

Mr. Lipand (Estonia): I join others in thanking the briefers for their insightful overviews. I would also like to welcome the Permanent Representative of Somalia in today's discussion.

Estonia warmly welcomes the recent political developments in Somalia, including the 27 May agreement, and the continued dialogue between the leaders of the Federal Government and the federal member states on the electoral process. We sincerely hope that this positive momentum continues and that it will enable credible, transparent and inclusive elections to be held without further delays.

Equally important are robust electoral security arrangements, which would ensure that the elections proceed smoothly. Looking ahead to the next election

cycle, in order to ensure that Somalia is making progress in its democratization process, Estonia strongly supports the development of an agreed pathway to one-person-one-vote elections in 2025.

Since the elections lay the foundation for Somalia's next chapter, the importance of women's participation cannot be over-emphasized, and in that I welcome Ms. Gaballe's message at today's meeting. We therefore call on Somali leaders to urgently identify a mechanism that would ensure the implementation of the 30 per cent women quota in the upcoming elections in order to safeguard their political representation. We also see the need to do more to advance women's rights in society more broadly. It is crucial that women's rights are codified in the revised constitution and other legal frameworks.

Estonia is alarmed by the increase of sexual and gender-based violence and the number of Somali women and children who remain trapped in a cycle of violence. This matter requires urgent attention by Somali authorities. Estonia calls on the Federal Government to accelerate the adoption of the new national action plan for ending sexual violence in conflict.

The security situation remains a major challenge. We condemn in the strongest terms the continuing attacks by Al-Shabaab, and we express our condolences to the victims and their families. The security sector can only improve if all stakeholders work together towards this important goal. Therefore, in the planning for the post-2021 mission, it is of paramount importance that the key players, including the Federal Government of Somalia, the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union, develop a common approach that is realistic in its timelines, tasks and goals.

Finally, Estonia is deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian situation. Routine spikes in humanitarian needs call for a more strategic approach. Climatic shocks continue to severely affect Somalia and require comprehensive solutions that offer prevention and threat mitigation. Estonia encourages further efforts that will proactively address those challenges, including in the upcoming the mandate renewal of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate Estonia's full support for Somalia and its people.

Mr. Kvalheim (Norway): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Swan, Special

Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia Madeira and Ms. Batula Axmed Gaballe for their insightful briefings.

While the electoral process faces new delays, we welcome the continued, constructive, atmosphere between Somali leaders under the leadership of Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble. Regular, constructive and inclusive dialogue in the National Consultative Council format is key to progress in implementing the electoral model, and timely, credible and inclusive elections are of utmost importance to bringing Somalia back to the promising reform track of the recent past and to ensuring democratic development. The economy and security of the Somali people have for too long suffered from the political impasse. Furthermore, we encourage Somali leaders to make full use of the good offices of the United Nations to find solutions to the outstanding electoral issues.

Somalia cannot afford an electoral process that excludes half of the population. We are therefore deeply concerned that Somali leaders have yet to define a clear mechanism for implementing the 30 per cent quota for electing women. While the appointment of the advocacy committee is a positive step — and we particularly welcome the presence of Ms. Batula Axmed Gaballe in today's meeting — Somali women deserve concrete results. And so far, the Upper House elections are not delivering.

The call for a 30 per cent quota for women is not imposed from the outside. It could not be stated more clearly than in the Somali Women's Charter itself, which reads, in its first operative paragraph:

“We, the Somali women, resolve to realize equal participation in all political and peacebuilding processes and accountability from the highest officials of the [S]tate. Without women's political participation there can be no sustained peace and development.”

This call from the women of Somalia must be heeded. The message we heard today from Ms. Gaballe was clear. It is possible to find a mechanism. Among other measures, seats can be reserved for women in the Upper House and the Lower House.

Norway condemns the worrisome high levels of the six grave violations against children. While Al-Shabaab remains the main perpetrator, we also note that a significant number of violations continues to be

attributed to Government security forces, including the Somali Police Force. We urge all parties to immediately end and prevent all violations against children and to comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia also remains dire. The rapid shifts from severe droughts to flooding is a reminder that Somalia is increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. It is therefore critical to support the Federal Government of Somalia to strengthen its capacity to integrate responses to climate-related security risks across Government.

Additionally, we are approaching the renewal of the mandate of United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSAM). We believe that the Council should consider the need for UNSAM to also improve its climate-related security risk analysis and reporting, including on how issues of climate security affect its mandate.

We note the report of the independent assessment team on the engagement of the African Union (AU) in and with Somalia post-2021, as well as the discussion in the AU Peace and Security Council on 30 July. However, considering the timelines in resolution 2568 (2021) for transferring responsibility for security to Somali authorities and for the reconfiguration of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), we also strongly encourage constructive dialogue on the way forward among the AU, the United Nations, the Somali Government and other key actors. The success or failure of a future, reconfigured AMISOM depends on the timeliness and quality of such a collective discussion.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of India.

I thank Special Representative James Swan for his update on the situation in Somalia. We appreciate his continuous and close engagement on this very important issue. I also thank Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Ambassador Francisco Madeira, for his briefing. I express my gratitude to Ms. Batula Axmed Gaballe, Chairperson of the Somali National Women's Organization, for sharing her insights with us today.

I would like to welcome the presence of His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Somalia at today's meeting.

We welcome the recent political developments in Somalia and hope that the Somali leadership and stakeholders will move ahead with the convening of elections. The 27 May agreement among the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states' leaders and the revised electoral timetable issued by the National Consultative Council on 29 June are positive developments in that direction. We also note that the Senate elections, although delayed, are being held in federal member states. The next step is the holding of elections for the House of People. The process was to begin on 10 August. We hope that the agreed timeline will be broadly adhered to and that presidential elections will take place as scheduled. We also hope that the agreement to have 30 per cent women's representation in the Parliament will be a reality soon. We therefore hope that we will continue to move forward in this spirit of consensus, which all parties have displayed so far.

A peaceful, free and fair democratic election is extremely important for the future of Somalia, even as the Council continues to discuss the important security transition. Democratic institutions cannot have legitimacy without elections. A representative democracy will have larger influence in State-building, which, in turn, will positively impact the security situation. We encourage greater cooperation between the Somali National Army and AMISOM, for ensuring stability and smooth elections in the country. It is important to bridge the gap between the African Union and Somali authorities on AMISOM's reconfiguration for the success of the elections.

Nonetheless, the prevailing security situation, as mentioned by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, continues to be a matter of concern. Al-Shabaab has stepped up its attacks and continues to try to disrupt the electoral process. Nearly 100 people have been killed in attacks by Al-Shabaab in the last few months. Al-Shabaab has also persisted with the recruitment of children and committing crimes against them. We strongly condemn such terrorist attacks and extend our full support to the operations conducted by the Somali forces and AMISOM against Al-Shabaab. We cannot afford to lose sight of our fight against terrorism, while we focus on elections.

The role of AMISOM in providing an enabling security environment for Somalia's progress cannot be overstated. AMISOM has played a key role in containing Al-Shabaab in Somalia for several years now. That is important not just for Somalia but for the wider Horn of Africa region. We support a phased handover of security responsibilities to Somali security forces commencing in 2021, with a view to transferring full responsibility by 2023, as the situation on the ground allows. The situation on the ground should guide the reconfiguration process, while taking into account the Secretary-General's proposal on the strategic objectives, size and composition of a reconfigured African Union Mission, by the end of September. In that context, we look forward to the AU assessment report being finalized.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia continues to be a matter of concern. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has reported that the current funding for the humanitarian response plan in Somalia is facing a shortfall of 60 per cent. The triple threat of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), desert locusts and flooding persists. Some 2.8 million people are projected to suffer from food insecurity this year. The international community should help OCHA bridge the shortfall and meet the humanitarian needs.

India has been supportive of Somalia by various means, including through the provision of medical facilities and capacity-building programmes and scholarships, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. India also participated in the International Monetary Fund's debt relief package for Somalia, by agreeing to contribute special drawing rights.

In conclusion, as Somalia passes through a critical phase, India will continue to support Somalia and its people and their desire for a stable, secure and peaceful future.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Somalia.

Mr. Osman (Somalia): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I wish you all the best in fulfilling your mandate this month.

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Swan, and Special Representative of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Madeira, for their briefings on recent development in the country. I welcome Ms. Batula Axmed Gaballe, Chairperson of the Somali National Women's Organization, and express my appreciation for her valuable briefing and tireless efforts in promoting women's rights in all areas and at all times.

After the signing of the 27 May political agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states' leaders, Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble was tasked with managing the elections process, with the goal of building trust and legitimacy. Over the past few months, he has worked hard on reconciliation efforts, capacity-building in electoral bodies, the management of the elections budget, election security and on ensuring broad-based participation from all sectors of society. The Federal Government of Somalia has engaged regularly with the leaders of the federal member states and key political stakeholders to ensure consensus around the electoral process. The National Consultative Council met in Mogadishu in late June and reached an agreement on key issues related to security arrangements, the safeguarding of the 30 per cent women's quota, electoral integrity modalities and election timelines.

With regard to election finance management, the Somali Government has developed an indicative election budget of \$18.7 million that reflects the requirement of implementing an indirect election process based on the 17 September agreement. The Federal Government of Somalia has set up a single treasury account for receipt of \$1.9 million from the Government budget and an estimated \$8 million in support for candidates' fees and other election expenditures. Furthermore, the Federal Government of Somalia signed an agreement with the United Nations to facilitate donor funds in the amount of \$7.7 million in support of the elections.

Pursuant to the 27 May agreement, the Federal Government of Somalia appointed a reconciliation committee of political figures from all the federal member states to mediate the dispute between Jubaland state authorities and the community leaders from the Gedo region over the implementation of the election within the state. Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble travelled to Kismayo and the town of Garbahaarrey in the Gedo region, where he met with elders, political leaders and civil society representatives

to lay the groundwork for the reconciliation committee effort. After his visit, a follow-up committee travelled to Gedo and lower Juba and successfully facilitated an agreement in which the Gedo region will select four candidates for the district commissioner and deputy district commissioner positions. Furthermore, an election management committee will be charged with holding elections in Garbahaarrey, while the police force of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) will provide security support.

On the security of the election, the Federal Government of Somalia established the National Election Security Committee (NESC), which consists of nine members, including the Federal Police Commissioner, state police commissioners, the AMISOM Police Commissioner and the United Nations, and is chaired by Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble. All federal member states are represented and are being consulted in the preparation of the plan to ensure the security of the election process. The NESC developed an election security budget and operational plan to be reviewed and approved at the next National Consultative Committee meeting in mid-August 2021. The NESC carried out an assessment of the election venues in the towns of Galkayo, Dhusamareb and Garbahaarrey, with further assessments to be completed in the coming weeks.

Progress in security sector reform remains ongoing, as comprehensive security sector reform continues to gain momentum. With streamlined and standardized Somali national armed forces, we have generated and integrated new forces, enabling our brave young men and women to continue their effort to defeat the terrorist groups and liberate more areas.

The Federal Government of Somalia pays tribute to the bravery and sacrifice made by the personnel of AMISOM and the police- and troop-contributing countries who have fought for a lasting peace and stability in Somalia over the last 14 years. We are cognizant of the fact that AMISOM cannot stay in

Somalia forever. Therefore, AMISOM must continue to transfer security responsibilities to Somali security forces in the post-2021 era, and all agreed security arrangements must be in line with Federal Government policies and priorities.

The European Union Training Mission in Somalia should be able to work effectively with the Somali leadership to achieve our common objectives of defeating Al-Shabaab, rebuilding recovered areas and providing public services to the population. In order to win the hearts of minds of the Somali people, our revised Somali transition plan not only articulates the process of the security transition but also guides any future agreed reconfiguration of AMISOM's ability to support Somalia under the new political governance and security disposition. Through this perspective, Somalia will assess the viability of any mission going forward; this is the view of that Somalia expects from all its partners.

In conclusion, the Federal Government of Somalia is on an upward trajectory and has made significant strides in a number of critical areas. Nevertheless, extraordinary challenges remain in the country, and we continue to strive at critical junctures to defeat Al-Shabaab and engage in State-building and federalization, as well as in democratization. The Federal Government of Somalia would like to reiterate its commitment to maintaining accelerated progress in the processes involved in implementing agreed roadmaps. We welcome the commitment of AMISOM and the United Nations to supporting the Federal Government of Somalia in its efforts aimed at achieving peace, stability and sustainable development for all Somalis.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to closed consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.