
Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at the UN Security Council debate on Somalia on 14th September 2011)

Thank you, Mr President.

At the outset, I would like to join others in thanking SRSG Augustine Mahiga for his comprehensive briefing on recent developments in Somalia and for the Secretary General's report. I would also like to welcome H.R. Dr Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, to the Council and thank him for his statement outlining his perspective on the situation in Somalia and the TFG's plans for the future. I would also thank AU's Special Representative for Somalia, Mr Boubacar Diarra and the EU's representative Mr Pedro Serrano for their statements.

2. The worsening humanitarian situation in Somalia, caused by the famine, is a cause for serious concern. As the Secretary General's report has noted, more than half of the Somali population is in the grip of this humanitarian crisis. While the international community has undertaken emergency measures to provide aid to those in need, nearly 2.8 million people are living in the hardest hit areas controlled by Al Shabaab, where access of humanitarian agencies is severely restricted. We urge all the Somali groups to provide unfettered access to the humanitarian agencies and facilitate the delivery of aid to all those in need. India has decided to provide humanitarian assistance of US\$ 8 million to the countries afflicted with severe famine and drought in the Horn of Africa, i.e. Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti, through the World Food Programme (WFP). This is in addition to US\$ 1.5 million contributed by us to the AU Trust Fund for Somalia and US\$ 0.5 million to the UN Trust Fund, both for augmenting the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). We appreciate the key role played by OCHA, WFP and other UN organizations in delivery of humanitarian assistance. We join others in calling upon member states to join the UN and AU efforts by responding positively to the humanitarian appeal.

3. Mr President, while the international community is battling the humanitarian crisis, there have been some positive developments on the political and security fronts. The signing of the Kampala Accord and its subsequent approval by the Somali Parliament and formation of a new government have imparted a positive momentum to the political process that needs to be maintained in the extended transition period. We also welcome the holding of the High-Level Consultative Meeting on Ending the Transition in Somalia from 4-6 September in Mogadishu and the adoption of a roadmap as a result.

We reaffirm our support to this process and hope that the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) will implement the roadmap in a time bound manner and complete the pending transition tasks. This alone would enable a genuine, inclusive and comprehensive national reconciliation to take place in Somalia for ending two decades long instability and insecurity. In this connection, we appreciate the engagement of the President and the Speaker of Somalia with the international community. We also thank SRSG Mahiga for his persistent efforts and cooperation with the Somali leaders and with the AU, East African Community, IGAD and other stakeholders.

4. The opportunity presented by the withdrawal of Al Shabaab from Mogadishu should be utilized by the TFG to increase its effective presence all over Mogadishu through delivery of basic services. This will not only enhance TFG's legitimacy but also help the political process. There is an urgent need to bring the AMISOM's strength to 12,000 as mandated by the Security Council. In this connection, we commend the governments of Uganda and Burundi for their contributions to AMISOM and sacrifices made by their peacekeepers..

5. Mr President, AMISOM is the mainstay of international efforts for re-establishing security in Somalia. It is, therefore, imperative for the international community to urgently bridge the resource gaps that adversely impact AMISOM's effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate. As the Secretary General has reported, without international support for equipping and outfitting additional troops, TCCs will continue to face difficulty in deploying peacekeepers in a timely manner. The member-states should contribute promptly to the UN and AU Trust Funds for AMISOM without caveats. As already mentioned, India has contributed US\$ 2 million for AMISOM operations through the AU and UN Trust Funds without any caveats. We also support the extension of the mandate of AMISOM.

6. There is also a need for expanding the TFG forces and strengthening their capacities for long-term stability and security in Somalia. New recruitments have to be undertaken as well as full training and proper equipment provided.

7. Mr President, piracy off the coast of Somalia remains a serious problem facing the international community. As of 31 August 2011, the Somali pirates held 19 ships and 405 hostages. Combating maritime piracy is, therefore, an important issue intrinsically linked with security situation in Somalia. So far, TFIs have not paid adequate attention to this problem. We hope that in the extended transition period, the TFIs will fully implement the benchmarks concerning piracy in the roadmap adopted on 6 September, including adoption of a legal framework against piracy, hostage-taking, payment of ransom, demarcation of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), establishment of operational coastguard, appointment of a counter-piracy coordinator, etc. In addition to the benchmarks in the roadmap, the TFIs should expeditiously implement the provisions contained in the relevant Security Council resolutions for restricting port revenues for Al Shabaab. In this connection, we will engage constructively with the members of the Security Council on the draft resolution on legal mechanism for prosecution and detention of pirates. We also stand ready to help in capacity building of the TFIs and the states in the region for effective measures against piracy off the coast of Somalia.

8. Further, given the growing scope and expanding coverage of the problem, the international community has to think about adopting a comprehensive counter-piracy strategy. In our view, such a strategy should involve:

- UN-led anti-piracy force to conduct naval operations. This would help in greater coordination in anti-piracy operations by various naval forces.
- Enactment of national laws on priority to criminalize piracy as defined in the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea.
- Effective sanitization of the Somali coastline along with identifying of safe corridors and buffer zones.

9. India has already taken several steps including anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden since 2008 and has also deployed its ships in Eastern and North Eastern Arabian Sea. This has helped neutralize several attempts of piracy. While we will continue our counter-piracy operations, there is also an urgent need for the international community to address the serious problem of hostage-taking by pirates and consequent humanitarian problems faced by the hostages and their families. We hope that the Secretary General's report on piracy, due in October, will contain concrete recommendations on all aspects of the problem of piracy, including hostage-taking and plight of hostages.

Thank you.

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