

STATEMENT BY MR. HARDEEP SINGH PURI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, AT UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL'S OPEN DEBATE ON SOMALIA ON MARCH 05, 2012

Thank you, Mr President.

Let me begin by congratulating the UK delegation on the assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. I would also like to put on record our appreciation of Ambassador Kodjo Menan and the delegation of Togo for their stewardship of the Council during the month of February.

2. Mr President, the political, security and humanitarian situations in Somalia and their consequences, particularly the problem of piracy and hostage-taking, are of serious concern for the international community. Today's Open Debate is, therefore, a timely endeavour to comprehensively address the situation in Somalia. We appreciate the delegation of the United Kingdom for organizing this meeting and thank you personally, Mr Minister, for presiding over this meeting. I would also thank the Secretary General and his Special Representative Augustine Mahiga for their comprehensive and valuable briefings.

3. Mr President, few days back more than fifty countries, including my own, participated in the London Conference on Somalia. The Conference served a useful purpose in reiterating the support of the international community for comprehensive stabilization of the situation in Somalia, while taking stock of the progress made so far in political, security and humanitarian fields. The Conference also reminded us of the difficult challenges that lie ahead.

4. The last one year has been a mixed bag for Somalia. There have been significant gains made by AMISOM and Kenyan and Ethiopian forces in securing Mogadishu and other areas in south and central Somalia. The extended transition period saw the adoption of a comprehensive roadmap by the Transitional Federal Institutions in accordance with the June 2011 Kampala Accord. The effective engagement of the international community also helped tide over the worst phase of the humanitarian crisis. Still, millions continue to suffer from the crisis and the implementation of the roadmap has left much to be desired. In spite of the pressure it is under, Al Shabaab with its recent affiliation to Al Qaeda remains a serious threat to peace and stability in Somalia and the larger region.

5. There is, however, an opportunity today in Somalia that has not been available for years. The TFIs can consolidate the gains made by AMISOM and TFG forces by urgently addressing the issues of governance and basic services in areas recovered from Al Shabaab. This would also result in emergence of organized economic activities and employment generation. For this to materialize, the international community has to persevere and continue its support for the people of Somalia.

6. AMISOM being the mainstay of security-related operations in Somalia deserves our continued support. In this connection, we welcome the adoption of Resolution 2036 by the Council, which provides for force enablers and multipliers for AMISOM and also expands the UN support package. The resolution will make available more sustainable and predictable resources for the TCCs and assist in the full implementation of the new Strategic Concept of AMISOM, including its limited maritime component. This would help AMISOM sanitize the Somali coastline and deprive Al Shabaab of revenues earned from port facilities and export of charcoal. We hope that the Council will agree to include naval assets for CoE reimbursement when it considers the extension of AMISOM mandate later this year. India made an uncaveated contribution of US\$ 2 million in 2011 to the AU and UN Trust Funds for AMISOM. We stand ready to provide further support to AMISOM.

7. In parallel with AMISOM operations, Somali stakeholders have to build on the gains in the field of security through progress on the political track. The TFIs should rid themselves of internal divisions and focus their energies on implementing the Kampala Accord and the Roadmap. The drafting and adoption of a new Constitution and its endorsement by a Constituent Assembly in a timely manner as per the Garowe Principles should remain a priority task. This process should be as broad-based as possible taking into consideration the traditional social structure and security situation on the ground.

8. Mr. President, piracy off the coast of Somalia remains a serious problem for maritime security and trade. A large portion of the world's trade, including India's estimated at about US\$ 120 billion annually, passes through the Gulf of Aden. Piracy off the coast of Somalia is adversely affecting this trade, costing several billions due to re-routing of vessels into safer routes and increased costs of insurance and security. As we speak, a number of seafarers, including 33 Indians, remain hostage to pirates. Their humanitarian condition remains a source of serious concern to the

government and people of India. What is more worrisome is that attacks by pirates have been increasing in spite of counter-piracy operations.

9. Given the growing scope and expanding coverage of piracy off the coast of Somalia, the international community has to think about adopting a comprehensive counter-piracy strategy. Such a strategy should involve effective sanitization of the Somali coastline, enactment of national laws on priority to criminalize piracy as defined in the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea and UN-led anti-piracy force to conduct naval operations and to coordinate anti-piracy operations by various naval forces. India, on its part, continues to undertake anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden and has deployed its ships in the Eastern and North Eastern Arabian Sea. So far, the TFIs have paid little attention to this problem. We expect the TFIs to expeditiously implement the benchmarks on piracy in the roadmap on transitional tasks. We stand ready to help in capacity building of the TFIs and the states in the region for effective measures to combat piracy.

10. In conclusion, Mr President, for lasting peace and security in Somalia, economic development has to form an integral part of our efforts. The international community should expand its development assistance to Somalia so that the Somali people directly benefit from the peace dividend. India, on its part, will continue to extend help to Somalia in capacity building through human resource development. We have recently increased the number of scholarships for Somali students and experts. We have also contributed in the information technology sector in Somalia. We will continue to partner with Somali authorities as they work towards turning a new page.

I thank you.

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