



Security Council

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Letter dated 26 September 2022 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolutions [2592 \(2021\)](#) and [2632 \(2022\)](#), in which the Council requested that I, following consultations with the Federal Government of Somalia, undertake a strategic review of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) to include recommendations for clearly defined, measurable and realistic benchmarks to track the Mission's timely execution and achievement of its mandate.

I appointed Mr. Ian Martin, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, to lead the independent strategic review. Mr. Martin was supported by a team comprising representatives of a number of departments of the United Nations Secretariat. As part of the review, the team held extensive consultations with the Federal Government of Somalia, the federal member states, United Nations entities, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, the African Union Commission, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the European Union, members of the Security Council and other international partners, as well as Somali think tanks and civil society, including organizations representing women and young people.

The report on the strategic review (see annex) notes the considerable progress made in Somalia since the establishment of UNSOM in 2013, while highlighting the political, humanitarian, socioeconomic and security challenges the country continues to face. Emphasis is placed in the report on the importance of close cooperation between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states for advancing the national priorities indicated in the communiqué of the National Consultative Council of 16 June 2022. Limited progress on a number of these priorities has been made in recent years owing to the protracted electoral crisis and tensions between the Federal Government of Somalia and some of the federal member states over the federal model to be implemented in Somalia.

The security situation, which remains unstable, and the ability of Al-Shabaab to conduct attacks across Somalia, are also highlighted in the report. In addition, the strategic review underscores the dire humanitarian situation resulting from the persistent drought and the growing frequency and intensity of climate shocks befalling Somalia, which are being exacerbated by climate change. The independent team leader notes that addressing the humanitarian situation must be the overriding priority for the United Nations in Somalia.

The report recognizes the significant contribution made by UNSOM to State-building efforts in Somalia, with the African Union Mission in Somalia ensuring a



more favourable security environment that has made it possible for political processes to move forward. The independent team leader, based on his engagements with the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states and the Government's position paper on the strategic review, stresses the continued need for a special political mission in Somalia and the importance of its good offices role and other core functions. The team leader also notes that the UNSOM mandate remains relevant in the current political context and is closely aligned with the priorities of the Federal Government of Somalia. At the same time, he underscores the need for the Mission's leadership to establish an order of priority among the different elements of the mandate.

It is further noted in the report that some of the assumptions made in the early planning stages of UNSOM have proven overly optimistic, as the Mission remains severely constrained by the security situation, dependent on the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia for security and hampered by the political climate. In the light of the renewed mandate, the report includes the recommendation that UNSOM accord top priority to providing support for an agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia and the leaders of the federal member states regarding the federal model to be implemented in Somalia and to ensuring that the agreement is codified in the Constitution. Other priorities include support for reconciliation, democratic participation, security sector reform and the implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan with respect to human rights, the rule of law, and the women and peace and security agenda. The report also makes the point that a supportive environment and comprehensive political agreements need to be in place for advisory and technical support to be effective.

The report notes that close collaboration with partners in Somalia, especially with the African Union, is crucial, and contains the recommendation that the partnership with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia be further strengthened by engaging in joint analysis and establishing joint co-located teams in overlapping mandate areas. The independent team leader emphasizes the importance of commencing planning for the security transition and the withdrawal of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, which will have significant implications for UNSOM. It is also important to plan out the measures to be taken in response to the request of the Federal Government of Somalia that the desired end goal for the transition from a special political mission to the United Nations country team be clearly defined. The establishment of joint teams and programmes is highlighted as an example of a best practice and a key tool for a successful transition. Lastly, the report contains the recommendation that a review of UNSOM staffing and configuration be carried out following the renewal of its mandate to ensure that the Mission's capacities are focused on key priorities and to strengthen its core political functions.

I fully support the recommendations contained in the strategic review, and I am convinced of the continued need for a special political mission in Somalia aimed at supporting the Somali authorities in the implementation of their priorities. I would like to emphasize the central importance of dialogue and cooperation between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states and commend the steps taken by the new Administration to this end. I urge the country's political leaders to work closely together to advance the key national priorities, in particular to address the humanitarian situation and complete the constitutional review process.

I am alarmed by the gravity of the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Somalia and call on Member States to provide additional funding to avert a humanitarian disaster. We must urgently work together to prevent famine in Somalia.

I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Martin for conducting the strategic review and for his insightful findings and recommendations. I thank the Federal Government of Somalia, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the European Union, and all international partners for their collaboration and contributions throughout this exercise. I would also like to thank the United Nations staff in Somalia for their commitment and their efforts in support of the country.

I am aware that the challenges may appear daunting at times, but Somalia is not alone on its path to peace, stability and development, and I would like to reaffirm the continued strong commitment of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) António **Guterres**

Report on the independent strategic review of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

I. Background, objectives and scope of the strategic review

1. The Security Council, through its resolution [2592 \(2021\)](#), requested the Secretary-General to undertake a strategic review of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) by March 2022, after the election process was expected to have concluded and after the anticipated reconfiguration of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Owing to the protracted delays in the electoral process, the strategic review could not take place within the time frame envisioned. The UNSOM mandate was subsequently renewed in May 2022 by resolution [2632 \(2022\)](#), in which the Security Council reiterated its request for the strategic review to be conducted in consultation with the Federal Government of Somalia and to be submitted by 30 September. It was further requested that the review report include recommendations for clearly defined, measurable and realistic benchmarks to track the achievement of the UNSOM mandate.

2. In response to the request of the Security Council, I was appointed by the Secretary-General as independent team leader of the strategic review. During my assignment, I was supported by a team comprising representatives from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Operational Support, the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions of the Department of Peace Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Office to the African Union.

3. The objective of the strategic review is to provide recommendations towards ensuring that UNSOM remains best positioned to support the new administration in Somalia in advancing its national priorities, and to inform the priorities and work of UNSOM in the period ahead. The strategic review took stock of UNSOM achievements to date and assessed current peace and security challenges in Somalia. Recommendations for benchmarks to track the mission's mandate delivery have been formulated as requested (see enclosure).

4. The strategic review team conducted a desk review of relevant documentation and held consultations in New York with United Nations departments, the Permanent Representative of Somalia, the African Union Observer, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Special Envoy for the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Somalia, and members of the Security Council. The team visited Somalia to consult with the Federal Government of Somalia, UNSOM, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), women and youth civil society representatives, Somali think tanks, the European Union and other international partners. The team visited Baidoa, South-West State, and Kismaayo, Jubaland, and held virtual engagements with the presidents of Galmudug, Hirshabelle and Puntland. I also travelled to Addis Ababa to meet with the African Union Commission, the United Nations Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa and representatives of the United Nations Office to the African Union.

5. Written inputs from relevant United Nations departments were submitted to the review team throughout the review process. I am grateful for the inputs received and

consultations held with the various stakeholders and for the contributions of members of the review team. The assessment and recommendations presented in this report are my own.

II. The situation in Somalia

6. Somalia has undergone significant political, security and socioeconomic changes in the past decade. These are characterized by the development and deepening of a federated political system and efforts to forge consensus on the division and devolution of powers at the central and state government levels, accompanied by initiatives to strengthen the security sector, make progress on debt relief and advance socioeconomic development, and address the persistent and deepening impact of climate change on the way of life and the livelihoods of many Somalis. While considerable progress has been achieved, it has been uneven, and many multifaceted challenges remain to be addressed. It is within this context that UNSOM, since 2013, has worked to discharge its mandate to support the efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia, the federal member states and the Somali people to advance their priorities on peace, security and development. However, the security and political environment affect the Mission's ability to implement its mandate, and Somalia once again faces a dire humanitarian crisis.

A. Security

7. Despite the national and international efforts to degrade Al-Shabaab, the group remains a resilient and formidable force that continuously adapts its modus operandi. Its operational force is estimated at between 4,000 and 7,000 fighters spread across the country, relying on the mass recruitment of children to bolster its ranks. Al-Shabaab remains in control of large swathes of territory in southern and central Somalia, where it maintains a shadow government and provides some degree of basic services, competing at times with government services, especially with respect to the provision of justice. In addition, the group exerts influence in territories outside its direct control to varying degrees, characterized by its ability to control key supply routes, infiltrate towns, extort businesses and citizens, conduct operations against ATMIS (formerly AMISOM) and Somali security forces and undertake high-profile operations in the Somali capital on a regular basis. Al-Shabaab remains adept at exploiting divisions and political tensions, navigating clan dynamics and manipulating grievances. Al-Shabaab further retains its capability to generate considerable domestic revenue, which finances its force and its range of operations. Assassinations of government and security officials and electoral delegates underscore the group's continued attempts to undermine State-building efforts. The overall aim of Al-Shabaab remains to oust the Government, expel ATMIS (formerly AMISOM) and other international actors and establish an Islamic state in Somalia in accordance with its interpretation of Islam.

8. As highlighted in the 2019 Federal Government of Somalia-African Union-United Nations joint threat assessment, the threat posed by Al-Shabaab has evolved in recent years, shifting increasingly from a primarily military threat to a largely asymmetric one. Since 2018, an increase in security incidents has been recorded year-on-year, with an average of 241 security incidents per month in 2022, predominately claimed or presumed to have been perpetrated by Al-Shabaab. The Banaadir, Shabelle Hoose and Bay regions remain most affected by Al-Shabaab activity. The attack against the ATMIS (formerly AMISOM) forward operating base in El Baraf in May 2022, the infiltration of the SafeLane Global compound inside the heavily protected Mogadishu airport zone in March and the complex attack on the Hayat Hotel in

Mogadishu in August are just some examples that underscore the capabilities and reach of the group. Attacks against the international presence in Mogadishu have also increased, with 15 mortar attacks penetrating the international airport compound recorded since 2019.

9. Beyond Somalia, Kenya remains most affected by Al-Shabaab terrorist attacks, but the incursion into Ethiopia in late July was bold in intent and substantial in scale and is indicative of the ability of the group to return to the use of more conventional military tactics. The recurrent attacks in neighbouring countries underscore that Al-Shabaab is not only a threat to peace and security in Somalia but to the broader region.

10. In line with the intention for Somalia to assume lead security responsibilities in 2021, the Security Council recognized, in its resolution [2568 \(2021\)](#), the need for a reconfigured African Union mission to enable and support Somali security forces in assuming full security responsibility. The African Union and the Federal Government of Somalia agreed that the security transition as laid out in the Somalia Transition Plan would take place in four phases: reconfiguration; shaping and clearing operations; decisive operations; and consolidation, drawdown and exit. Following the submission of the concept of operations by the Federal Government of Somalia and the African Union, and the African Union-United Nations joint proposal on the strategic objectives, size and composition of the reconfigured African Union mission, ATMIS was established on 1 April 2022 through Security Council resolution [2628 \(2022\)](#), in accordance with the communiqué of the African Union Peace and Security Council at its 1068th meeting, held on 8 March 2022.

B. The humanitarian situation and the impact of climate change

11. The strategic review took place at a time when severe persistent drought is creating a serious threat of famine in Somalia. More than 90 per cent of Somalia is already experiencing severe to extreme drought conditions. Nearly 50 per cent of the population, 7.8 million people, require some form of humanitarian or protection assistance, and 7.1 million people are considered food insecure. More than 213,000 Somalis are facing an imminent threat to their lives due to catastrophic food insecurity, with many parts of the country at risk of famine in the weeks ahead. In the worst-affected areas, a third of all livestock have perished, destroying livelihoods. Forecasts indicate that the October–December 2022 rainy season is likely to fail.

12. Malnutrition and disease outbreaks have surged, and more people are facing difficulties accessing safe water, proper sanitation and adequate food. An estimated 1.5 million children under the age of 5 face acute malnutrition, with an estimated 730 children having died in malnutrition centres between January and July 2022. The drought also continues to displace people, with an estimated 1 million people displaced from their homes since January 2021, adding to the already high internal displacement numbers, which are now estimated at 2.9 million people. The humanitarian response continues to be hampered by access challenges and funding shortfalls, as well as the security situation. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has further compounded the humanitarian caseload.

13. The past five years have seen no improvements in the overall humanitarian situation, which continues to be characterized by recurrent climate shocks and conflict, and the country remains heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance. With the country at the forefront of climate change, the increasing intensity and frequency of climatic shocks are anticipated to exacerbate the humanitarian situation further. Although extreme weather conditions are not new to Somalia, a change in weather patterns has been observed, with climate change believed to influence severe weather.

Since 1990, Somalia has experienced more than 30 climate-related shocks, including 12 droughts and 19 floods. These climatic changes are likely to increase in both frequency and severity in the upcoming decade.

14. Climate-related environmental change, including extreme weather patterns and deteriorating soil quality, have a significant impact on the country's population, which is highly reliant on subsistence farming and pastoralism. Employment in the agricultural sector was 72.4 per cent in 2019, underlining the impact further land degradation and irregular climate patterns would have for the Somali population. The recurrent drought and flooding as well as related migration movements and displacement aggravate competition for resources, such as water, and increase the risk of local tensions and conflicts. The displacement is driving rapid urbanization, and the country has one of the highest urbanization rates in the world, with 4.3 per cent annual urban growth, placing considerable strain on population centres, which are ill-equipped to deal with the influx of internally displaced people. This dire humanitarian situation must be situated within the context of the country's extremely low development indicators, as 70 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line.

C. Political developments

15. Protracted political disagreements between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states over the nature of federalism and the electoral process characterized the period since the most recent strategic review, deepening fault lines and divisions in the country. Persisting tensions underscored the still-contentious nature of federal relations. The reduced collaboration between the Federal Government of Somalia and some of the federal member states affected the implementation of key priorities, including inclusive politics, security and justice, and socioeconomic development.

16. At the same time, instability deepened in several federal member states and was characterized by internal conflicts and regional electoral dynamics. In Jubaland, the contested 2019 election of President Ahmed Mohamed Islam "Madobe", which was initially not recognized by the Federal Government of Somalia, and the deployment of federal security forces to Jubaland's Gedo region resulted in sporadic clashes between federal and Jubaland forces, complicating clan dynamics in the region and entailing a reduction of the areas controlled by Jubaland authorities, in a state that remained in part controlled by Al-Shabaab. In Galmudug, the agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia and Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a, a Sufi paramilitary militia, led to the group disarming and dissolving, but an alleged failure to fully implement the agreement later resulted in aggrieved Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a elements engaging in clashes with federal and state security forces in the state capital. The political environment in Hirshabelle remained characterized by tensions between the two dominant sub-clans over the power-sharing agreement. In South-West State, clan tensions intensified following the 2018 arrest of Mukthar Robow, the former Al-Shabaab deputy leader, and amid allegations of Federal Government of Somalia interference in the state elections, which have continued to influence state-level and national political discourse.

17. Once again, the ambitions for one-person, one-vote elections proved unattainable in the 2021/2022 elections in the light of security challenges, but also owing to the lack of political will by several stakeholders who favoured the continuation of the indirect clan-based model of power distribution. Disagreement over the electoral model and timelines, tensions between the Federal Government of Somalia and some of the federal member states and the unilateral extension by Parliament of the executive term limits during the height of the political crisis

culminated in clashes between government and opposition-aligned security forces in Mogadishu in April 2021. The crisis highlighted the persisting fragility of the political situation and the ease with which security forces could rapidly fragment. An agreement reached on 27 May 2021 between the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states leaders ultimately paved the way for the conduct of indirect elections. In an annex to the agreement, Somali political leaders reinforced their commitment to the key priorities of the State-building process following the completion of the indirect elections.

18. The 2021/2022 parliamentary electoral process thus saw the repetition of the 2016/2017 clan-based indirect electoral model, slightly expanded. Widespread allegations of malpractices and irregularities in the indirect parliamentary elections were reported. Despite substantial international and national advocacy, the 30 per cent quota for women to which Somali political leaders had committed was not attained, and women's representation in Parliament regressed from 24 per cent in 2016/2017 to 21 per cent. Nevertheless, the conduct of the indirect presidential election itself was widely perceived as transparent and credible, and the election of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as tenth President of the Federal Republic of Somalia on 15 May 2022 was uncontested, enabling a peaceful transfer of power.

III. Programme of the new Federal Government of Somalia

19. Initial steps taken by the new administration towards improving relationships with federal member states have been encouraging, with a stated commitment to regular meetings of the National Consultative Council, comprising Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states leaders, and mutual recognition of the importance of strong cooperation. However, historical tensions between the central and state-level authorities will not be easily overcome, and significant efforts will be required to break this cycle and achieve the political cohesion necessary to jointly advance key national priorities.

20. At the first National Consultative Council meeting, held on 16 June 2022, Somali leaders agreed that national priorities would focus on the completion of the constitutional review process, the finalization of the implementation of the national security architecture, the development of a unified democratic electoral model, political and social reconciliation, dialogue with "Somaliland", the implementation of the federal system, the finalization of an independent national judicial system and efforts to address the humanitarian situation.

21. These priorities were further elaborated in the Government programme, submitted to Parliament on 3 August 2022, through a six-pillar approach. The first pillar, security and liberation, focuses on the reliberation of territories from Al-Shabaab and on establishing a safe and secure Somalia. The second pillar, justice, outlines the establishment of an independent judiciary and the promotion of good governance and reconciliation. The third pillar, "Somalis at peace with themselves", emphasizes reconciliation, the constitutional review, federalization, democratization and dialogue with "Somaliland". Pillar four, economic self-sufficiency, is aimed at the reduction of poverty and achieving economic self-sufficiency. The fifth pillar, social affairs, promotes access for all Somali citizens to education, health, water and economic opportunities and efforts to address the environmental issues the country is facing: climate change, land degradation, natural disasters and desertification. Lastly, under pillar six, the Federal Government of Somalia commits to a balanced foreign policy based on the interests of the country and to strengthening its role in regional and international organizations.

A. The Federal Government of Somalia position on the strategic review of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

22. After initial discussions during the visit of the review team to Somalia, the Federal Government of Somalia presented a position paper on the UNSOM strategic review. It acknowledged “enormous contributions” made by UNSOM in support of State-building efforts in Somalia and appealed for the continued support of the Mission to such efforts through the appropriate government institutions and channels. The Federal Government of Somalia reiterated that UNSOM assistance should be in line with its priorities, as outlined in the six-pillar government programme. Consistent with these, it said that its priorities include inclusive political settlements, completion of the constitutional review process, security sector reform, an agenda for national liberation, strengthening the federal system and developing institutions that can respond to the needs of the public. In addition to the President’s top agenda of security and reconciliation, key milestones include having a national registration system, a reformed judiciary and focus on human rights protection. The intended outcomes of efforts towards inclusive politics are threefold: finalizing the constitutional review and implementation process; accelerating meaningful reconciliation outreach and consolidating the federal system; and achieving a democratic direct vote and robust multiparty system at the end of the current mandate.

23. The Federal Government of Somalia expressed gratitude for the role of UNSOM in coordinating security partners to date and looked forward to its support in strengthening the development of security institutions to play this role in the future. It acknowledged the importance of UNSOM good offices and its helpfulness to the Federal Government of Somalia in the facilitation of negotiations and dialogue among Somali stakeholders. It looked forward to direct technical support by UNSOM in the sectors of governance, institution-building, security, inclusive politics, humanitarian issues and economic and social development. The continuation of the United Nations “one-door-to-knock policy” was anticipated, with a lean United Nations system aligned with the vision and delivery mechanism of the Federal Government of Somalia.

24. The Federal Government of Somalia emphasized that the UNSOM mandate should be implemented with respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of Somalia. It expressed its eagerness and commitment to take on more responsibility, stating that since its establishment, the UNSOM mandate had continued to expand, which could potentially limit the Mission’s responsiveness, flexibility and effectiveness in core areas of focus. It noted that the mandate of UNSOM was without clear benchmarks or an exit strategy and sought an agreement on the guiding principles and the role of the United Nations in contributing to the vision of the Federal Government of Somalia, which should encompass a common understanding of an “end state”. The Federal Government of Somalia further urged that a transition from a special political mission to the United Nations country team should be clearly articulated and expressed its readiness to jointly identify a set of accomplishments that the Government should achieve for such a transition and gradual phase-out to be implemented. The Federal Government of Somalia requested clear, realistic and measurable benchmarks to track the timely execution and achievement by UNSOM of its mandate, with the benchmarks based on and in support of the Government’s priorities.

B. Views of the federal member states

25. During the visits of the review team to Jubaland and South-West States and its virtual conversations with the Presidents of Galmudug, Hirshabelle and Puntland

States, all the federal member states highlighted the continued need for the role of UNSOM, emphasizing the importance of its good offices function, coordination of the international community and capacity-building support, including in the areas of security, elections, governance, the rule of law and justice. Each called for a strengthening of the UNSOM presence in their respective state and increased support to their administration.

26. The President of Galmudug underscored the importance of UNSOM opening a field office in his state capital as soon as possible to facilitate engagement with the Mission at the state level. Several of the federal member states highlighted that UNSOM should focus on strengthening the federal system and called for an expansion of the mediation role of UNSOM, stressing that the United Nations remained the most trusted mediator in Somalia. Some federal member states emphasized the importance of reaching an agreement on federalism, especially fiscal federalism. The need to continue advancing the economic, social and political participation of women was recognized, and additional support was sought to build the capacity of institutions to protect human rights. The federal member states leaders also called for urgent and increased support to deal with the drought.

IV. United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

A. Role and mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

27. UNSOM was established in 2013 by Security Council resolution [2102 \(2013\)](#), replacing the United Nations Political Office for Somalia. In resolutions [2102 \(2013\)](#) and [2158 \(2014\)](#), the Security Council provided UNSOM with a broad mandate: (a) to provide good offices, supporting the peace and reconciliation process of the Federal Government of Somalia; (b) to provide strategic policy advice on peacebuilding and State-building, including on governance, security sector reform, rule of law, disengagement, disarmament and reintegration, development of a federal system, constitutional review process and preparations for elections; (c) to assist the Federal Government of Somalia in coordinating international donor support; (d) to help to build the capacity of the Federal Government of Somalia to promote and protect human rights and women's empowerment, promote child protection and prevent conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence; and (e) to monitor, help to investigate and report to the Council on and help prevent any abuses or violations of human rights, including against women and children.

28. In resolutions [2540 \(2020\)](#) and [2592 \(2021\)](#), the Security Council further reinforced the UNSOM mandate to support inclusive politics and pursue reconciliation; support preparations for the 2021 elections and elections at the federal member state and district levels; implement the human rights due diligence policy; provide support to accelerate the implementation of security sector reforms and strengthen rule of law, including through a federated justice, corrections and police system; provide technical and capacity-building support to advance the participation of women and youth and the full participation of all Somalis in peace and reconciliation efforts; improve the operation of the comprehensive approach to security; provide support to the Federal Government of Somalia to implement the national strategy and action plan for preventing and countering violent extremism; bolster the ability of the Federal Government of Somalia to deliver services and attract investment; support the efforts by Somalia to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and to help the Federal Government of Somalia to establish frameworks for managing resources and power-sharing.

29. Since its establishment, UNSOM has played a major role in supporting the peacebuilding and State-building process in Somalia, including by discharging its good offices role, with AMISOM providing – at a great cost in lives – a crucial enabling security environment in which the political processes could move forward. Very significant progress has been achieved in the past decade, including the creation of the Federal Government of Somalia, the formation of the federal member states, the liberation of the main urban population centres from Al-Shabaab, three indirect electoral processes resulting in a peaceful transfer of power, the adoption of a provisional Constitution and the assumption of lead security responsibility by the Federal Government of Somalia in 2021. In March 2020, Somalia attained the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative decision point, restoring the country’s access to regular concessional financing and launching the process toward debt relief, which is expected to be completed in 2023. The success achieved to date must be attributed to the Somali authorities, AMISOM and the United Nations, together with the strong commitment and support of international partners.

30. Despite the considerable progress achieved since 2013, it is important to recognize the scale of the political, humanitarian, security and development challenges that persist in Somalia and the limitations that the security situation imposes on UNSOM.

B. Assessment

31. Several of the initial planning assumptions guiding the establishment of UNSOM have proved to be overly optimistic, in particular, the ability of UNSOM international staff to operate in a permissible environment and engage with Somali authorities and civil society outside of fortified compounds. Despite several attempts following the relocation of UNSOM from Nairobi in 2012 to establish a presence in Mogadishu outside the Aden Adde International Airport compound, this intention ultimately had to be abandoned in view of the threat environment. UNSOM has been able to establish field offices in four out of the five federal member states, but, with the exception of the office in Puntland, these also remain highly reliant on ATMIS (formerly AMISOM) for security and confined in their operations. It also maintains an office in “Somaliland”.

32. Moreover, many political priorities of the Federal Government of Somalia, which its international partners agreed to support, and which informed the mandate of UNSOM, were not met within the timelines envisaged and have stalled in recent years. These include the finalization of the constitutional review process and the conduct of universal suffrage elections, both of which were initially intended to be completed by 2016. Progress on priority areas in the mandate of UNSOM, as outlined in the Somalia technical assessment of 2013 and the strategic review of 2017 and reiterated in Security Council resolutions, has remained slow, and anticipated timelines have repeatedly slipped. Although the state structures at the federal and the member state level continue to be incrementally strengthened, much remains to be done, including in the areas of reconciliation, good governance and basic service delivery at both levels. It needs to be acknowledged that progress on UNSOM mandate implementation has been highly reliant on the political context, including on the degree of cooperation or tension between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states.

33. The lack of agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states on the federal model and how it is to be implemented, together with recurring tensions, have constituted a critical challenge to the State-building process. This lack of agreement in key areas has had an impact on other national priorities, including security, that are heavily dependent on strong cooperation

between the political centre and the regions. Advisory and technical support available for capacity-building has not been utilized to its full effect in the absence of greater political progress. Future decision-making by the international community needs to be based on a more realistic assessment of what is achievable within a given period.

34. Nevertheless, it is evident that there is a high correspondence between the mandate of UNSOM and the priorities communicated by the new authorities. The good offices of UNSOM are warmly appreciated by the new Federal Government of Somalia, the federal member states and all international partners; the Government is explicitly requesting further support with regard to the facilitation of negotiations, dialogue among Somali stakeholders and political reconciliation efforts. The Mission's coordination role in support of Somali-led processes is valued by the Somali authorities and international partners. This includes the important role UNSOM has played to date in supporting the Federal Government of Somalia in coordinating the security assistance it receives and seeking to overcome the high level of fragmentation in this support. The recently established core security partners group was highlighted as a particularly valuable forum in this regard, connecting key security partners with the Federal Government of Somalia in one coordinated format.

Political participation

35. Despite the disappointing lack of progress towards universal suffrage elections, the contribution of UNSOM, in partnership with ATMIS (formerly AMISOM) and other international partners, to ensuring the elections of 2021/22 cannot be overstated. It required the energetic good offices and coordination of international actors by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, the technical support of the Integrated Electoral Support Group and the security support provided by ATMIS (formerly AMISOM). The extension of the mandate of UNSOM to support elections at the federal member state and district levels was well justified by the initial progress made in Puntland and the potential for this to be replicated elsewhere.

36. In the period ahead, the United Nations should continue, as requested, to support the steps necessary to achieve an increasingly democratic direct vote and multiparty system, as envisioned by the political leadership of Somalia, but should at the same time encourage and increase support to the extension of democratic participation in political processes at federal state and district levels. Strategies to promote women's representation and the participation in elections of women and youth should not await the beginning of the next electoral process, and it should be recognized that universal suffrage will not in itself ensure women's representation without the inclusion of quotas or other temporary special measures in the electoral legal framework.

Constitution/federalism/reconciliation

37. The political obstacles to the effective utilization of technical advice have applied equally strongly to the constitutional review process and the development of the federal system. Although progress has been made on a technical review of the Constitution, outstanding political issues, including the delineation of powers between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states, fiscal federalism and the status of Mogadishu, remained unresolved. Progress on deepening federalism has stalled in the absence of an agreement on the federal model. With regard to reconciliation, UNSOM has supported the development of the National Reconciliation Framework and continued to employ its good offices to support dialogue between the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states. Moreover, UNSOM has provided support to local conflict resolution, including, with IGAD, support towards a ceasefire agreement between Puntland and "Somaliland" over the contested Sool and Sanaag regions, as well as the Gaalkacyo settlement.

38. Reaching an agreement on the federal model and codifying this agreement in the Constitution remains the overarching priority for the period ahead, and UNSOM should support this objective as a matter of priority and urgency. The next two years will be critical to advancing this agreement as well as the other national priorities, given that the focus is expected to shift towards the federal elections at the end of 2024, likely overshadowing all other processes. The priority now accorded to this matter by the new administration, and its commitment to improving relations with federal member states, require a strong focus from UNSOM. The coordination between the Federal Government and the federal member states through ad hoc mechanisms such as the National Consultative Council has proved beneficial in fostering discussions and agreements. UNSOM should continue to support the strengthening of collaboration and cooperation between the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states, which will be critical to addressing key issues and advancing priorities. Reconciliation should remain a strong focus, especially with regard to the dialogue between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states, as requested by the Somali authorities. More local reconciliation activities should also be supported by UNSOM, in close coordination with ATMIS, in view of their complementary reconciliation mandates. In addition, as requested by the federal Somali authorities, support should be provided to Somalia-“Somaliland” dialogue.

Security and rule of law

39. While there has been incremental progress, advancement of the Mission’s mandate regarding the security sector and the rule of law has also been affected by the protracted political crisis and lack of agreement on the federal structure. In the absence of overarching political agreements, policy advice and technical support provided by UNSOM could not often be effectively utilized to advance critical reforms in these areas. This has especially been the case in the justice sector, as the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states have yet to agree on a federated justice and corrections model, which would define the structure and jurisdiction of the courts and respective institutions. In the absence of such an agreement reached and codified in the Constitution, the ability of UNSOM to support and provide technical advice as envisaged in the 2017 strategic review remained limited. Support for the implementation of the national security architecture and the Somalia Transition Plan has continued to be provided, including through the 2016 new policing model, which established the federated policing system in Somalia. Despite the expansion of state police services, disagreements over federal and state police responsibilities have had an impact on the implementation of the new policing model as well as the national security architecture. With regard to the security sector, in addition to providing strategic policy advice and technical support, UNSOM continued to strengthen coordination under the comprehensive approach to security and the core security partners group formats, working in support of strengthening the lead role of the Federal Government of Somalia in these areas. Concerning disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, strategic advice and capacity-building support has been provided to support the revised national programme on defectors in close coordination with national and international partners.

40. Working jointly with ATMIS to support the Federal Government of Somalia in implementing the Somalia Transition Plan will continue to be a key priority for UNSOM, and will require enhancing the capacity of security institutions through the provision of strategic policy advice. UNSOM should support the Federal Government of Somalia in strengthening its coordination of security assistance during the security transition. In addition, UNSOM should continue to address remaining gaps in the implementation of the national security architecture by supporting the development of legislation and strategic policy advice. Supporting the continued implementation

of the new policing model, and reaching agreement on a justice and corrections model and its subsequent implementation, are additional priorities. UNSOM should also continue to support the Somali authorities in addressing rule of law and security challenges through the provision of politically informed strategic advice, in close collaboration with the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes that support these priorities, through capacity-building.

Human rights and protection

41. From the outset, UNSOM was given a strong human rights and protection mandate. It monitors, investigates, analyses and reports on violations of international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, as well as on conflict-related sexual violence and violations and abuses against children during armed conflict. The mandate also prioritizes support and advocacy for the creation and implementation of policies and programmatic responses in furtherance of the regional and international human rights commitments of Somalia. UNSOM provides capacity-building and technical support to protect and promote human rights. Progress achieved has included the enactment of a bill that established the National Disability Agency and the Disability Rights Bill, the establishment of the Agency itself, and continuing technical and capacity-building support to ensure it can achieve its mandate. Moreover, UNSOM has provided key support to Somalia to meet its obligations regarding international human rights mechanisms – such as the Human Rights Council – and its treaty-reporting obligations. This support was provided through the Joint Programme on Human Rights, the first of its kind in Somalia, between the United Nations and the Federal Government of Somalia, which has now been succeeded by a second joint programme. UNSOM has also supported the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states in implementing their child protection commitments and strengthening protection frameworks for children. However, the implementation of human rights priorities remains slow. Critical legislation to protect human rights in Somalia is either non-existent, outdated or falls short of regional and international human rights standards, and the operationalization of an independent human rights commission is yet to be achieved, while key human rights-related legislation, such as the Child Rights Bill, the 2018 Sexual Offences Bill, the Juvenile Justice Bill, the Female Genital Mutilation Bill and the National Disability Rights Bill, remain in various stages of development and endorsement. UNSOM further provides the lead for the United Nations in Somalia on the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces.

42. The new leadership of Somalia has made commitments to legal and institutional reform, and UNSOM should prioritize support to the authorities for the swift enactment of human rights-related laws as well as for the operationalization of essential institutions, such as an independent national human rights commission. This includes providing technical advice and capacity-building support to the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states; strengthening civil society to effectively engage the security and justice institutions on human rights; and supporting United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in mainstreaming human rights and protection considerations into humanitarian and development responses, including disability inclusion, the protection of vulnerable groups and the provision of early warning on critical human rights issues. Concurrently, United Nations-system wide implementation of the human rights due diligence policy should continue to be strengthened, with UNSOM providing guidance and technical advice to United Nations entities in Somalia on the policy, including the development of new risk assessments and the implementation of identified mitigation measures.

Inclusive politics

43. In line with the Mission's mandate to provide support to the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states in order to enable the full participation of women, and to support the implementation of a 30 per cent quota for women in the parliamentary elections, substantial efforts were directed towards the attainment of those goals. These included high-level advocacy to encourage Somali stakeholders to translate their commitments to the 30 per cent quota into action, as well as technical support to the electoral management bodies. Nevertheless, only 21 per cent of elected Members of Parliament are women. Moreover, only 10 women have been appointed to the new Cabinet, amounting to 13 per cent, increasing the frustration of women leaders with regard to limited representation.

44. UNSOM should intensify its efforts to enhance women's participation in all aspects of political, social and economic life. Codifying women's representation in the Constitution and legal frameworks will be critical to the achievement of these objectives and should remain a key focus for the United Nations. To this end, providing support to newly elected women parliamentarians should be a priority. The Women, Peace and Protection Programme of the Peacebuilding Fund will be an important tool to advance this agenda.

45. In the light of the significant youth population of Somalia, with 70 per cent of the population under the age of 30, strong engagement and adequate youth representation will be important to establish inclusive institutions and processes. In addition, the marginalization of minorities remains endemic in Somalia and fosters inequity. Hence, efforts to promote youth and minority participation in political, reconciliation and peacebuilding processes, from which they remain largely excluded, should also be intensified.

Humanitarian response and the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus

46. United Nations efforts to assist Somalia in the humanitarian response to drought and possible famine are beyond the scope of this review but must be an overriding priority for Mission leadership, as it is for the authorities; the demand on government capacity means that such efforts may have an impact on all areas in the period ahead. Somali authorities and United Nations entities are clearly right to have recognized that climate-related environmental change is causing increasingly intense and frequent humanitarian crises and adversely affects stability, and to give high priority to water management in their application of a humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus approach.

Mandate, prioritization and sequencing

47. The correspondence of the existing mandate of UNSOM with the priorities and requests for support from government entities does not, in my view, require it to be substantially amended. However, Mission leadership needs to continue to ensure that these priorities are the focus of the workplans of UNSOM, which also need to reflect a strong contextual grounding and realistic sequencing, so that political preconditions are prioritized and achieved before efforts are made to deliver technical support. It would be premature for this review to make recommendations regarding the staffing and configuration of UNSOM, which should reflect these priorities and requires deeper consideration after the extension of the mandate. I therefore recommend that an early review of staffing and configuration of UNSOM should take place and should take into account my observations that follow regarding security and transition and the proposed benchmarks.

Field offices

48. All regional authorities have requested an expansion of the field offices, stressing the significant need for support in varying degrees in the federal member states. In the light of the needs and opportunities for engagement, I recommend a strengthening of the field presence, if the security situation allows, including the further relocation of staff. The strengthening of the field offices should be accompanied by the development of regional strategies for each of the federal member states to shape the engagement and expansion of each field office in line with the priorities of the Mission within its mandate.

C. United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia integration and joint programming

49. The 2013 technical assessment mission was far-sighted in recommending the development of joint programmes between UNSOM and the United Nations country team. The structural integration of the United Nations presence in Somalia, which started at the inception of the Mission, was further strengthened by the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Somalia for 2021–2025. The Framework is focused on four priorities in line with the ninth Somalia National Development Plan: inclusive politics and reconciliation; security and rule of law; economic development; and social development. Integration should be further enhanced, including by improving coordination to ensure alignment in providing support to the implementation of the priorities of the Federal Government of Somalia. The institutionalization and operationalization of the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus will also be critical to ensuring sustainable and long-term approaches across the three pillars.

50. Although integration has not been without challenges, the establishment of joint teams and programmes between UNSOM and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Somalia represents a best-practice example. Thirty-six joint programmes in areas of common work, including the Integrated Electoral Support Group, the Integrated Gender Office and joint teams on constitutional support, security sector reform, justice and corrections, and human rights, have been carried out. Joint programmes are highly dependent on donor support and have ended with varying degrees of success or disappointment when the political conditions for effective implementation were not achieved. Planning towards an eventual exit of UNSOM and a transition to the United Nations country team requires a reinforcement of joint programmes in priority areas, which will be dependent on the Federal Government of Somalia and the United Nations convincing donors that the political commitment for implementation now carries credibility. In this regard, the joint programmes should further be aligned with priorities and take into consideration the political realities and lessons learned from previous joint programmes.

D. Partnerships

51. The Mission's partnership with other international actors is a key aspect of its coordination mandate, and essential both to its own mandate delivery and to the overall effectiveness of the international effort to support Somalia. The cooperation and coordination among UNSOM and the African Union/ATMIS (formerly AMISOM), IGAD and the European Union to support political consolidation and an effective and sustainable security transition are of particular importance, given the leading roles these organizations have played and will continue to play as the configuration of international support to Somalia undergoes further changes.

52. The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union remains central to the effective delivery of the mandates of both organizations in Somalia. Regular dialogue between the African Union Commission and the United Nations Secretariat is sustained through a range of forums which bring together senior-level decision-makers, with the United Nations Office to the African Union playing a key facilitating role. Such collaboration will be of continuing importance as the political process in Somalia advances, the security handover from ATMIS to the Federal Government of Somalia and the Somali security forces unfolds, and the work and role of both organizations continues to evolve.

53. In Somalia, the establishment of the Senior Leadership Coordination Forum and technical-level exchanges on thematic issues have helped to improve coordination between UNSOM and ATMIS (formerly AMISOM). These and other forums, most notably the African Union, IGAD, European Union and United Nations “Quartet format”, which bring together international actors in Somalia, have at times proved highly effective, such as during the recent protracted electoral crisis.

54. In the light of the ongoing security transition, it is therefore timely to consider initiatives that can serve to strengthen coherence and coordination between UNSOM and ATMIS with regard to strategic planning, mandate delivery and transition planning. The proposals of the 2013 technical assessment mission included not only the participation of AMISOM in a joint leadership team with UNSOM but also the inclusion of AMISOM in information, analysis and planning teams to promote common situational awareness and understanding of strategic challenges. Such collaboration between UNSOM and ATMIS should now be considered, along with the possible establishment of joint teams in substantive areas with overlapping mandates, such as security sector capacity-building, stabilization and reconciliation, and the strengthening of physical co-location. The complementarity of the two organizations should continue to be capitalized on, especially in the federal member states, remote locations and newly liberated areas, where ATMIS is often less constrained by security considerations.

55. The continued strong collaboration between the United Nations and international financial institutions has supported Somalia on its path towards the completion point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, economic recovery and reform, social service delivery and shock-responsive sustainable financing of the security sector and governance, as well as efforts to strengthen public financial management and integrity. The creation of a jointly funded United Nations-World Bank liaison function, co-located in the offices of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator) and the World Bank has been very beneficial in contributing to the strengthening of the partnership and should be considered best practice.

E. Security of the United Nations presence in Somalia and impact of the security transition on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

56. In May 2019, I conducted an internal review at the request of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs after a mortar attack penetrated the United Nations compound in Mogadishu and at a time of tension with the then Federal Government, which complained of its limited engagement with staff of UNSOM. In view of the seriousness of the risk to staff, I recommended that a location-dependency exercise should be undertaken to determine which functions could be carried out from Nairobi, or where staff might have greater opportunities for engagement in regional field offices. Subsequently, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General initiated

two footprint exercises, the second of which took into account lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic regarding working arrangements. As a result of these exercises, 12 UNSOM staff, 31 UNSOS staff and 25 staff of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes were relocated to field offices and Nairobi respectively. At the time of the present review, the number of United Nations international staff based in Mogadishu was 104 for UNSOM, 203 for UNSOS, 69 for the Department of Safety and Security and 254 for the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

57. Since the January 2019 mortar attack on the United Nations, additional substantial efforts have been made to strengthen the security measures around and inside the compound, including by establishing checkpoints, fortifying structures and increasing the number of bunkers, as well as ensuring overhead protection of staff offices and living accommodations and social areas. Meanwhile, of the 15 mortar attacks which have landed inside the Aden Adde International Airport protected area since 2019, 8 have penetrated the United Nations compound. Fortunately, they caused no fatalities, although they resulted in injuries to a United Nations staff member and a United Nations contractor. In addition, Al-Shabaab remains highly adaptive and there has been a constant evolution of its tactics, techniques and procedures, which means that, at any given time, the current security measures may no longer provide adequate protection for staff. The vulnerability of the protected area to infiltration was evidenced in March 2022, when Al-Shabaab infiltrated the SafeLane Global compound and killed three international SafeLane employees. The risk assumed by United Nations personnel travelling to meeting locations in Mogadishu was highlighted by the attack on the regional offices in Banaadir in July 2019, in which the Mayor of Mogadishu was killed, with Al-Shabaab later claiming that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia was the target of the attack.

58. Although the United Nations is not Al-Shabaab's primary target, United Nations staff and operations remain vulnerable to opportunistic attacks, and face risks as collateral victims. The security risk to staff must be taken into account when considering whether their function requires them to be resident in Mogadishu. At the same time, the engagement of international staff of UNSOM with Somali authorities and civil society must be enabled to the greatest extent that is consistent with acceptable risk.

59. Given the critical role of ATMIS (formerly AMISOM) in providing security for the United Nations presence in population centres, its drawdown and the success or otherwise of the security transition may have a considerable impact on the already highly restricted ability of the United Nations to operate in Somalia. The withdrawal of ATMIS is likely to affect an array of United Nations activities, including the delivery of humanitarian aid, development programming and UNSOM mandate implementation, especially in southern and central Somalia. This will require a risk assessment, contingency planning and the possible repositioning of the Mission and its operational posture, depending on the security situation. The location dependency of staff will need to be continuously reassessed.

F. Transition planning

60. UNSOM faces and must plan for a triple transition. First, while it is the clear view of the Federal Government of Somalia and international partners that a special political mission remains necessary for the period immediately ahead, UNSOM must, as requested by the Government, envisage its eventual phase-out, with United Nations assistance to Somalia being sustained by the United Nations country team. Second, it must, as noted, anticipate and adjust to the potential implications of the drawdown and exit of ATMIS for the security of UNSOM and its field offices. Third, the

consequent drawdown and possible eventual liquidation of UNSOS will affect the mission support it has been providing to UNSOM.

61. Transitions can be better managed if they are properly anticipated. UNSOS has already established a transition planning cell, and UNSOM should now do so as well. Regarding the security transition, UNSOM and UNSOS transition planners should work closely in a tripartite relationship with ATMIS. At the same time, a planning process between UNSOM and the United Nations country team should be intensified, in accordance with the 2013 policy on United Nations transitions in the context of mission drawdown or withdrawal, and the Secretary-General's planning directive for the development of consistent and coherent United Nations transition processes, to undertake early thinking and agreement on a joint transition road map. Staffing for long-term capacity development beyond the expected life of UNSOM should be located in the United Nations country team, where there can be greater flexibility in staffing to respond to changing requirements and needs, subject to the availability of donor funding.

62. The relationship between UNSOS and UNSOM, as well as the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, will require consideration in the context of these transitions. In accordance with Security Council resolution 2245 (2015), the Head of UNSOS reports on the delivery of the UNSOS mandate to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia. This relationship between the Special Representative and the Head of UNSOS will need to be particularly close during the coming transitions. The mission support available to UNSOM alongside ATMIS is in many ways more substantial than would be available through the budget of a stand-alone special political mission, and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes also draw on UNSOS support on a cost-recovery basis. Consideration should be given to identifying opportunities for expanded collaborative support arrangements between the Secretariat and the United Nations country team to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. In anticipation of the drawdown of UNSOS, UNSOM needs to plan ahead to assume its own mission support functions. It might be useful for this to involve establishing, when feasible, certain initial capacities, such as human resources, legal and financial functions, within UNSOM.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

63. There is strong consensus on the continued need for a special political mission in Somalia, requested by the Federal Government of Somalia and by international partners, with its core tasks of providing good offices and strategic advice on peacebuilding and State-building, as well as supporting the Government in the coordination of international support, building the capacities of Somali federal and State institutions, supporting the constitutional review process, providing electoral support, strengthening the rule of law and monitoring and promoting human rights.

64. The mandate remains relevant for the coming period and is closely aligned with the priorities of the Federal Government of Somalia. A broad mandate allows the Mission the flexibility to provide support as needed, recognizing that not all areas of mandated engagement can or will be advanced at the same pace. However, Mission leadership should ensure that the work plans of UNSOM are strongly focused on the support requested by the Federal Government of Somalia in accordance with Somali priorities and reflect realistic sequencing, so that political preconditions are prioritized and achieved before efforts are made to deliver technical support.

65. Attaining overarching political agreements and the frameworks for their implementation is essential for the Mission to be able to deliver its mandate.

Providing support for reaching an agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states on the model of federalism to be implemented, and codifying this agreement in the Constitution, should be of the highest priority.

66. A review of the staffing of UNSOM should be conducted as soon as possible after the renewal of its mandate to ensure that the Mission's capacities are focused on mandate delivery and the core priorities. The 2013 technical assessment mission noted that it would be important for UNSOM to adapt over its lifetime to new needs identified by the Somali authorities, so that in addition to core staff it would require access to substantial flexible funding arrangements. The current budgetary process for special political missions does not enable adaptation and flexibility. In the context of an eventual transition to a United Nations country team alone, and in view of the high risk and costs associated with staff continuously based in Mogadishu, consideration should be given to the deployment of additional expertise when required through the agencies, funds and programmes. However, this requires the availability of donor funding, and core staffing must remain sufficient to deliver on the Mission's mandate and maximize its engagement with authorities and civil society in Somalia, consistent with security considerations.

67. A review of the configuration of the Mission should be conducted under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia following the mandate renewal and in concert with the staffing review. The internal structure and reporting lines in UNSOM should be reviewed with a view to strengthening core political functions, which should always drive the work of a special political mission, providing the context for the overall work of the Mission and its joint programmes with the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The reconfiguration review of UNSOM should assess how the role of the Chief of Staff, which is critical to the overall coordination and management of the Mission, can be further empowered.

68. The role of national staff in UNSOM is even more essential than in most peace operations, in view of the security constraints on the mobility and external engagement of international staff, and should be further increased. In line with General Assembly resolution [74/263](#), positions that can be nationalized should be identified and further investment made in the capacity-building of national staff. Every effort should be made to recruit additional female national staff, who remain greatly underrepresented.

69. The drawdowns of ATMIS and UNSOS will have major implications for UNSOM, and it is paramount that UNSOM and the United Nations country team begin planning to adjust to the implications of the security transition, in close coordination with ATMIS and UNSOS. Consideration should be given to begin establishing some mission support functions within UNSOM, such as human resources, financial and legal functions, as UNSOM prepares to take over mission support from UNSOS. In the meantime, the reporting relationship between the Head of UNSOS and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia needs to be particularly close during the coming transitions.

70. As requested by the Federal Government of Somalia, planning should begin for the development of a road map for the eventual transition from UNSOM to the United Nations country team. In addition, the Mission should discuss the benchmarks proposed by the present review with the Federal Government of Somalia in accordance with its wish to reach a common understanding of an "end state".

71. In order to ensure the maximum preparedness for the three transitions UNSOM is facing, it is recommended that a transition planning cell within the Mission be established, which should prepare plans and road maps for each of these transition processes in close coordination and collaboration with ATMIS, UNSOS, the

Department of Safety and Security and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

72. Joint programming between UNSOM and the United Nations country team is a best practice and should be strengthened with renewed donor support, in accordance with the outlined priorities of the Federal Government of Somalia and the UNSOM mandate. Joint programming in areas that will eventually be continued by the United Nations country team will contribute to the future transition.

73. The partnership among UNSOM, UNSOS and ATMIS should be further strengthened, including through leadership retreats and the regularity of the Senior Leadership Coordination Forum. The cooperation between UNSOM and ATMIS should be further reinforced at the technical level, including through the establishment of joint co-located teams, especially in the areas where mandates overlap, such as reconciliation and security sector reform. In addition, ATMIS should be invited to participate in UNSOM information, analysis and planning teams.

74. The Federal Government of Somalia and all interlocutors stressed the importance of the convening role of UNSOM, which must be maintained. The support to the Federal Government of Somalia given by UNSOM to strengthen its coordination of security sector assistance is of particular importance during the security transition and should be carried out in close collaboration with ATMIS. Currently overlapping security coordination frameworks should be streamlined in order to enhance their effectiveness in support of the mechanisms of the Federal Government of Somalia, such as the Security and Justice Committee.

(Signed) Ian **Martin**

Enclosure

Benchmarks

1. As noted in the annex, the Security Council has requested recommendations for clearly defined, measurable and realistic benchmarks to track the achievement of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM). The Federal Government of Somalia has requested that such benchmarks be based on and in support of its priorities, and has expressed its readiness to jointly identify a set of accomplishments that the Government should achieve in order for a transition from a special political mission to a United Nations country team to be implemented.

2. The difficulty in defining benchmarks for any peace operation is that the achievement of its mandate clearly does not depend on the mission and its effectiveness alone: as experience in Somalia has amply shown, it depends, critically, on the political context determined largely by domestic actors, as well as on the roles of other international partners. It is possible to enumerate activities planned by a mission towards elements of its mandate, but these carry no guarantee of delivering the intended achievements irrespective of the political context, which in practice requires activities to be adjusted as that context develops.

3. I believe that the most useful and realistic approach is to define benchmarks for the priorities the Federal Government of Somalia is setting out to achieve, and indicators for the support that UNSOM should aim to deliver. The benchmarks that follow reflect the stated priorities of the new administration, although, within the limited timescale of the review, it has not been possible for them to be jointly discussed and agreed. The benchmarks are consistent with the elements that are relevant to the priorities of UNSOM of both the mutual accountability framework, endorsed at the Somalia Partnership Forum, and the strategic priorities and indicators of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The successful completion of the benchmarks would make appropriate a transition from UNSOM to the United Nations country team, but this should be condition-based, and to set a timeline would be premature.

Politics

Benchmark 1: Advance the national political priorities, through good offices, the provision of strategic advice and supporting partner coordination, towards the completion of the constitutional review process and the parliamentary adoption of an amended Constitution and implementing federalism and deepening inclusive politics.

Indicator 1: The review of the Federal Constitution, including the harmonization of the federal member states' constitutions with the Federal Constitution, advanced.

Indicator 2: Measures aimed at enhancing the rights of women, youth and marginalized groups in the Constitution promoted.

Indicator 3: Progress made in strengthening and institutionalizing dialogue, coordination and cooperation between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states.

Indicator 4: Somalia-“Somaliland” dialogue advanced.

Benchmark 2: Progress achieved on inclusive political agreements and Somali-led initiatives towards the peaceful resolution of local conflicts, in line with the national reconciliation framework.

Indicator 1: Implementation of the national reconciliation framework and national reconciliation plan advanced.

Indicator 2: Good offices exercised on conflict resolution.

Indicator 3: Women's, youth and minority participation in peacebuilding and reconciliation processes enhanced.

Elections

Benchmark 3: Progress made on the preparations for the conduct of the 2026 direct federal elections.

Indicator 1: An inclusive political agreement on a road map for 2026 federal elections advanced.

Indicator 2: Progress made on the revision of federal and state electoral legislation.

Indicator 3: Electoral management bodies mandated to implement the 2026 elections increasingly capacitated.

Indicator 4: Progress achieved on the establishment of an inclusive and transparent national voter registration system.

Indicator 5: International partner support for planning, preparation and conduct of federal elections, including the voter registration exercise, effectively coordinated.

Indicator 6: Women's, youth and minority participation and representation in the electoral process increased.

Benchmark 4: Extension of democratic participation at the subnational level.

Indicator 1: Electoral management bodies at the federal member state level in support of direct subnational elections increasingly capacitated.

Indicator 2: Women's, youth and minority participation and representation in the subnational electoral processes increased.

Rule of law and security

Benchmark 5: Rule of law strengthened, including by increasingly capacitating policing and justice institutions at the federal and federal member state level.

Indicator 1: Progress made towards agreement on and implementation of a federated justice and correction model.

Indicator 2: A federated justice system increasingly capacitated at the federal level and in all federal member states.

Indicator 3: Establishment of a Judicial Services Commission comprising federal- and state-level representatives advanced.

Indicator 4: International partners' rule of law support at the Federal Government and federal member states level effectively coordinated.

Indicator 5: Proportion of women serving in the police force and justice and corrections sector increased.

Indicator 6: Continued progress made on the implementation of the new policing model.

Benchmark 6: Progress made on strengthening federal and federal member states security institutions, including by advancing security sector reform, and coordinating and advancing the implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan and the national security architecture.

Indicator 1: Enhanced support provided to the Federal Government of Somalia in coordinating international partners providing assistance to the Somali security sector.

Indicator 2: Security sector coordination, management and oversight strengthened at federal and member state levels.

Indicator 3: United Nations coordination with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia strengthened, and joint transition planning advanced.

Indicator 4: Progress made towards aligning stabilization initiatives with priorities identified in the transition plan in support of government efforts.

Human rights

Benchmark 7: Advancing the promotion and protection of human rights in compliance with regional and international obligations.

Indicator 1: Somali institutions increasingly capacitated to review, enact and implement legal and policy frameworks to promote and protect human rights in Somalia.

Indicator 2: Establishment of a national human rights commission in line with the Paris Principles advanced.

Indicator 3: Codification of human rights in the Constitution promoted in line with recommendations of the universal periodic review.

Indicator 4: Progress made in the review and enactment of legal frameworks addressing protection gaps in conflict-related sexual violence, gender-based violence and child rights – the Child Rights Bill, the Juvenile Justice Bill, the Somali Penal Code and the Sexual Offences Bill (2018).

Indicator 5: Increased implementation of the two action plans signed in 2012 and the 2019 road map to end and prevent the recruitment and use, and killing and maiming, of children, and other grave violations against children.

Indicator 6: United Nations system-wide implementation of the human rights due diligence policy strengthened.

Indicator 7: Increased implementation of the joint communiqué on prevention and response to sexual violence and implementation of the national action plan on ending conflict-related sexual violence.

Gender equality and the women and peace and security agenda

Benchmark 8: Progress achieved on gender equality and the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Indicator 1: Revision and endorsement of the Somali national gender policy advanced.

Indicator 2: Participation, involvement and representation of women at all levels of decision-making, in elections, peacebuilding and reconciliation processes increased.

Indicator 3: Progress made towards the endorsement and implementation of the national action plan on Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#).

Indicator 4: Progress made towards the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Partnerships and coordination

Benchmark 9: Government-led aid architecture and aid coordination initiatives strengthened, including enhanced capacity and improved effectiveness and sustainability of the national aid coordination functions.

Indicator 1: A review of high-level and technical coordination frameworks and regular meetings with a view to streamlining efforts completed.

Indicator 2: Effective partner coordination in support of the Federal Government of Somalia on the Sustainable Development Goals strengthened.

Indicator 3: Programming in line with the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus approach increased.
