



Security Council

Seventy-fifth year

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Provisional

President: Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium)

Members:

China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
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France	Mr. Michon
Germany	Mr. Schulz
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Niger	Mr. Aougi
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. DeShong
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mr. Hunter
Viet Nam	Mr. Dinh

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2020/121)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2020/121)

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. James Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia; Mr. Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia; and Mr. Dan Smith, Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

Mr. Madeira is joining this meeting via video-conference from Addis Ababa.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2020/121, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Swan.

Mr. Swan: The year 2020 has the potential to be a transformative year for Somalia. A number of key national priorities are due to conclude and will impact Somalia's trajectory for years to come. Last October, at the Somalia Partnership Forum, Somalia and its international partners agreed on the main priorities on which Somalia must not fail in 2020. Those include achieving debt relief, holding one-person-one-vote elections, finalizing the federal constitution, advancing the fight against Al-Shabaab and consolidating the federal State.

Already, there has been good progress on Somalia's economic priorities. The Executive Boards of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have confirmed Somalia's eligibility for debt relief

under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. That milestone demonstrates that, with unity and common purpose, the federal Government and federal member states can achieve even highly ambitious goals. There has been progress, too, in the passage of key legislation to strengthen Somalia's fiscal framework, such as the Companies Act and the Public Financial Management Act. The 2020 budget, approved by Parliament and signed by President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo, reflects steadily increasing revenue generation.

In the area of human rights, Somalia has submitted its first-ever treaty report on the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, signed the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Africa and approved its national policy on refugees, returnees and IDPs.

As I reported to the Council in November (see S/PV.8671), for Somalia to navigate the remaining challenges and achieve its ambitious priorities, all Somalia's stakeholders must work together in the national interest. That responsibility begins with Somalia's leaders. It is for them to engage in dialogue in a spirit of national unity and set aside narrow political interests to strengthen Somalia's State, security and prosperity.

In my last remarks to the Council, I welcomed the meeting in November between the President and some political party leaders. Regrettably, those consultations have not continued. Meanwhile, the Federal President and federal member state leaders have not met together as a group since May 2019. The protracted absence of a broad political consensus on the way forward in 2020 remains a threat to further progress.

In December, I led representatives of the African Union, the European Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in a series of consultations with political leaders and civil society groups in the federal member states, as well as with the federal executive and legislative branches and other key stakeholders. We briefed President Farmajo on our findings and emphasized the urgent need to resume dialogue. We and international partners stand ready to support that, as required.

While technical advances across political, security, economic and humanitarian agendas have continued,

I must underscore that those gains will quickly reach their limits without the necessary political agreements. I call on Somalia's leaders as a matter of urgency to meet and engage in dialogue on Somalia's national priorities.

In 2020, Somalia will face a critical test of its State-building progress through the holding of historic one-person-one-vote elections. In recent years, Somalia has established a track record of regular, peaceful transfers of power. That commendable achievement must now be preserved in 2020. In addition, a move to one-person-one vote elections will mean a shift from the elders-based selection of recent political cycles to direct voting by the people of Somalia.

The new electoral code has now been approved by the House of the People and the Upper House and signed into law by the President. While an important step, the new law, regrettably, does not address many outstanding questions necessary to implement the code. Those questions relate to the locations of constituencies, how to guarantee 30 per cent of seats for women and the modalities to enable Somalis from across the country to participate. I call on the Federal Parliament, in collaboration with the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) and in consultation with the Federal Government, the federal member states and other stakeholders, to resolve those issues urgently so that technical preparations can get under way. That must include the federal member States ensuring that the NIEC can maintain offices across the country to organize elections.

Elections must also be held in Somaliland, where parliamentary elections were last held in 2005. I urge the authorities and all political actors to find a way through the current impasse for both parliamentary and local elections to take place in Somaliland before the end of 2020.

Political space and debate will be an essential component in the year ahead in Somalia to enable candidates, journalists, civil society and international partners to engage frankly in the political discourse. We especially look forward to hearing the voices of women, young people and minorities in an open debate on Somalia's future.

Continued efforts towards reconciliation will also be necessary to forge unity on Somalia's future. We call on political actors in Galmudug and Jubaland in particular to engage in dialogue, refrain from violence and avoid divisions that will be exploited by Al-Shabaab.

We note that recent security deployments in Jubaland's Gedo region have led instead to increased tension.

Turning to the security situation, let me first pay tribute to the courage of the Somali National Army (SNA) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in confronting Al-Shabaab. There has been steady, commendable progress in rebuilding Somalia's security institutions, including implementation of biometric registration, electronic payment of salaries for the security forces and personnel records. Unfortunately, military operations have slowed since mid-2019 and force generation has, to date, not been sufficient for the tasks required in 2020, including priority operations against Al-Shabaab and reopening main supply routes. Despite the efforts of the SNA, AMISOM and international partners, regrettably, Al-Shabaab retains the ability to conduct large-scale attacks in Mogadishu, including against the United Nations and the international community. In the recently recovered areas in Lower Shabelle, it is also able to generate significant revenue through extortion, as well as conduct operations beyond Somalia's borders.

It is essential that the Somali Government clarify its operational priorities and generate the forces necessary to enable operations to degrade Al-Shabaab, defend recently recovered areas and reopen main supply routes. Those operations must be conducted with respect for human rights and sequenced with the return of legitimate local governance, the rule of law and stabilization activities in order to be sustainable.

AMISOM has committed to implementing the reduction of 1,000 soldiers by 28 February, as decided by the Security Council in resolution 2472 (2019). Prior to the drawdown, the Somali Government, AMISOM and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia prepared a joint threat assessment, as requested by the Council and by the African Union Peace and Security Council. AMISOM remains essential to maintaining security under current circumstances, but it is also time to begin inclusive discussions on the strategic outlook and requirements to enable AMISOM to progressively hand over security ownership to the Somali authorities in a manner that preserves hard-won gains while achieving greater strategic effect against Al-Shabaab.

Vulnerable Somalis continue to face extreme humanitarian challenges. Back-to-back droughts, flooding, conflict and insecurity have left 5.2 million people in Somalia in need of assistance — that was before

the worst locust outbreak Somalia has experienced in 25 years. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is supporting the Government in mitigating the potentially catastrophic impact on food security. I call on donors to urgently provide funding and support for the 2020 humanitarian response plan. In the longer term, we must align behind the Somali Government's national development plan to advance humanitarian, development and peacebuilding goals.

Regional cooperation is essential to addressing the many challenges in the Horn of Africa. I welcome the efforts of the President and regional leaders to resolve differences and strengthen ties. In that regard, we note that the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Mr. Abiy Ahmed, arranged a meeting earlier this month between President Farmajo and the Somaliland President, Mr. Muse Bihi Abdi. We look forward to their further engagement with a view to constructive dialogue.

There is much to do in the year ahead. Only by working together — as Somalis, as partners, and in a spirit of unity and compromise — will progress be made. Further impetus and consensus-building are needed to ensure that key 2020 benchmarks for elections, security and relations between the Federal Government and federal member states do not fall further behind schedule. I look forward to Somalia's leaders taking the bold steps necessary to enable such progress in this critical year. I also look forward to the United Nations continuing to play its role through the full implementation of the mandate authorized by the Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Swan for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Madeira.

Mr. Madeira: This is a crucial year for Somalia, in which the country is expected to deliver on pressing national priorities. Inclusive politics, elections and debt relief under the advancement of the transition plan are just some of the most immediate of those priorities. So far, the signs are positive, despite the many challenges.

On 25 August, with the support of the international community and partner organizations and after due consultations with the Federal Government of Somalia and the Galmudug authorities, the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) deployed forces in Dhuusamarreeb, with the purpose of helping to create a reassuring atmosphere for the reconciliation conference

to take place and support the establishment of security conditions for the ensuing electoral process to evolve in a peaceful and violence-free environment.

The successful holding of the Federal Government's promoted Galmudug reconciliation conference resulted in the stakeholders agreeing on the modalities for the election. The state formation effort was given a boost with the successful conclusion of the negotiations regarding the quota of parliamentary seats to be reserved for Ahl Al-Sunna Wal-Jama'a, which opened the way for the state electoral process to begin and the election of the 89-member state Assembly and other organs of the state to take place.

We made it clear then and we make it clear now that the election was but one step in the right direction among the many that are required. The reality on the ground in Galmudug, under the paralysis of state institutions, demands that the primacy of politics remain at the forefront of all efforts under way to once again make Galmudug a functioning and viable federal member state that is capable of achieving sustainable peace and providing for its people. In that context, the inclusive politics momentum that was garnered with the successful holding of the Galmudug reconciliation conference should be harnessed and enhanced, not lost. A lot remains to be done to make Galmudug a strong, vibrant and reconciled society.

We therefore urge the leadership of Galmudug to continue to work in earnest to ensure that no genuine Galmudug stakeholder is alienated and that all 11 clans that constitute the state of Galmudug have a guaranteed place around the table where their future is being shaped and their destiny sealed. It is therefore important that we, the international partners engaged with helping Somalia overcome its present challenges, continue to work in earnest to encourage the Somali people to embrace and emulate the spirit and letter of the Dhuusamarreeb reconciliation conference and ensure that genuine dialogue and harmonious interaction are established between the leadership of the federal member states and their communities and between the Federal Government of Somalia and the governments of the federal member states.

It is AMISOM's strong belief that this multifaceted interaction, if supported, harnessed and sustained, will unlock the immense reconciliation capacity of the Somali people, the most assured pathway to sustainable peace in Somalia.

We applaud the Federal Government's continued commitment to fostering dialogue among the Somali people, as demonstrated by the recent meeting between President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo and Mr. Muse Bihi Abdi of Somaliland, in the margins of the thirty-third African Union Assembly, earlier this month. This is a very encouraging development and a source of great hope for the future of Somalia.

As I noted earlier, Somalia is embarking on an important year, and one of the most important priorities this year is the organization of peaceful and credible national suffrage for the election of members of the Federal Parliament and that of the Federal President. The fact that Somalia's federal electoral law has been approved by the House of the People and signed into law by President Farmajo a few days ago is an important and very positive development. We at AMISOM recognize that there are still a number of important issues to be ironed out in order to ensure the unhindered and smooth implementation of the electoral law, but we remain optimistic and confident that the momentum gained in the last two months will continue and that whatever obstacles may stand in the way of the elections in the last quarter of this year will be successfully overcome.

For this, a lot of responsibility has been placed in the hands of the National Independent Electoral Commission and Ms. Halima Ismail Ibrahim, its Chair. It is our duty to support her in this endeavour by providing the Commission with the commensurate material and financial resources it will need; the security and mobility that will be indispensable for the effective holding of the election; and the expertise that it will require, in terms of both regular electoral staff and specialized personnel. We at the African Union reaffirm our continued readiness to support the peace process, both technically and in terms of security.

We are galvanized by the tenacity, steadfastness and resilience with which the Federal Government of Somalia has been implementing its commitment to the terms agreed with the Bretton Woods Institutions. This capacity to stay the course against all odds is now paying off. Somalia has met the required benchmarks under the fourth staff-monitored programme with regard to domestic revenue, mobilization, public financial management, financial-sector stability, and compliance with anti-money-laundering and combating the financing of terrorism. As a result, early this month the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank agreed that Somalia is now eligible for assistance

under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative. We congratulate the Federal Government of Somalia on that great achievement.

The recently concluded threat assessment indicates that Al-Shabaab remains resilient and retains the capacity to carry out attacks against the Somali security forces, AMISOM and innocent civilians, mostly using improvised explosive devices, mortars and targeted assassinations.

In a concerted effort to degrade and contain the enemy, AMISOM and its partners continue to support the Somali security forces with ground and air operations focusing on Al-Shabaab's presence and activities in Middle Shabelle, Lower Shabelle, Middle Juba and Mogadishu. The implementation of the transition plan remains the rallying point of our mandated tasks towards 2021. Our operations in this regard are confronted with challenges related to the slow pace in the generation and equipping of the Somali security forces; the lack of sustained intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capability service; and inadequate logistics support for the Somali National Army.

As mandated by the Council under resolution 2472 (2019), AMISOM is required to draw down another 1,000 of its troops, the third batch since 2018. This is a task that is ongoing and will be completed by 28 February. The drawdown will be on a pro rata basis. There will be, however, consideration for a threat assessment when reconfiguring the remaining forces within our sectors.

The current politics of drawdown are a complete mismatch with the reality obtaining in the theatre of operations. The process of generating adequate, well-trained, well-equipped and logistically well-supported Somali forces to take over security responsibilities for AMISOM is not in tandem with the targets and timelines we have set for ourselves in the transition plan. The process is slow, underfunded, profoundly dependent on the goodwill of individual partners, with no shared and coordinated training plans and no evident correlation with the need to generate, in a timely manner, forces capable of taking full security responsibility from AMISOM and allow the completion of the current transition by 2021. As a result, the AMISOM forces that, per the transition plan and concept of operations, are supposed to be reconfigured into more flexible and more mobile forces capable of sustainably going out and taking on and degrading the enemy are the same forces

that are currently still holding the bulk of the population centres they have liberated from Al-Shabaab.

In that context, the operations they can undertake against the enemy cannot go beyond a limited distance from the population centres they are holding. These negatively impact the task of securing the main supply routes, the pursuit of the enemy through its strongholds and the capturing and holding of new territory from Al-Shabaab.

The Security Council may wish to look more closely into the reality that is confronting our forces and those of the Federal Republic of Somalia in the theatre of operations and consider the additional measures that need to be taken to allow pressure to be exerted on Al-Shabaab in a sustainable, consistent and relentless manner so that the enemy can be effectively degraded and the Lower Shabelle successful joint operations extended to much wider Somali territorial expanses.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Madeira for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith: I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to speak to the Council today about the effect of climate-related impacts on peace operations in Somalia. This is a glimpse into the world of tomorrow, in which peace operations will be undertaken in security environments that are increasingly influenced by climate and vulnerable to its vagaries.

The mandate renewals in 2018 and 2019 for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) referred to the impact of climate change. Against that background, my institute, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, has explored the evidence of climate impact, assessed the risks it poses and identified responses. We released our report in late 2019, and my briefing today summarizes its findings.

In a nutshell, floods and droughts in Somalia exacerbate conflict and displacement, thereby increasing the risk that the efforts of UNSOM and the work of the Federal Government of Somalia to build peace will be undermined. The pressure of weather events is part of what challenges the current power-sharing agreement, providing, *inter alia*, recruitment opportunities for the Al-Shabaab terrorist organization.

Turning that around, so that the response to climate variability creates opportunities for peacebuilding, is

perhaps the essence of the challenge facing the Federal Government of Somalia and UNSOM. Addressing the negative impact of environmental change on peace operations could offer an opportunity to build a positive relationship between environmental resilience and sustainable peace.

I do not need to explain to the Council the contours of conflict in Somalia. Conflicts persist among competing clans and ideological and political groups. There are both national and local conflicts, and both types feed each other. The local conflicts are often closely linked with access to natural resources, especially land, fisheries and water. The ownership of resources is closely linked to livelihoods and ways of life and therefore to markers of communal identity, which makes conflict particularly hard to resolve or even manage and embeds the influence of climate deep within the factors that shape the prospects of security and insecurity — peace or conflict — in Somalia.

Let us therefore turn to the country's climate. Our report does not argue that climate defines everything in Somalia or elsewhere. But the evidence is that if our analysis leaves out nature, including climate, then the analysis is incomplete. Somalia experiences some of the world's highest mean annual temperatures and has long been prone to extreme weather conditions. In the six decades since 1960, the country has experienced a gradual and continuous increase in mean annual temperature. While the conflicts have made data collection and tracking difficult, in 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projected a temperature increase of between 3.2°C and 4.3°C by the end of the twenty-first century — far exceeding tolerable levels. Meanwhile, rainfall is erratic and varies widely between the seasons and from year to year. In 2014, the IPCC projected more rain for Somalia in the coming decades, with the rain falling more intensely, thus generating a high and growing risk of flooding and soil erosion.

Consequently, seasons and weather are hard to predict. This uncertainty has a direct impact on everyday life for a people who are highly dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. It intensifies competition for natural resources and generates conflicts because, as herders shift away from traditional grazing routes due to unexpectedly changed conditions, so farmers find themselves having to defend their land and crops against extra pressure.

Herders are more inclined to sell livestock in times of extreme weather, which depresses local prices, weakening an already weak market, which closes options for a dignified livelihood for young men. It therefore indirectly encourages criminality and creates opportunities for recruitment by armed factions. In short, local climate realities feed Al-Shabaab with a pool of potential recruits. Of course, the influx of small arms into the region offers armed factions additional opportunities for building their strength.

Further, local conflicts can quickly escalate to become conflicts at the national level. Disagreements on natural resources are absorbed into Somalia's larger political dynamics and have led to some of its deadliest violence. And worryingly, at the same time as resource-based conflicts have both deepened and escalated, migration to the cities and internal displacement have had the effect of weakening traditional means of managing and resolving conflicts.

The evidence is clear that climate-related shocks and stresses can destabilize Somalia's prospects for peace. Extreme weather events create water and food insecurity that give Al-Shabaab the opportunity to act as service providers, which allows the group's political narrative to gain support and decreases trust in the peacebuilding efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia and the United Nations.

UNSOM and the United Nations country team have responded to the increasing pressure and recurrence of extreme weather events and their knock-on effects. Based on the lessons learned from the 2011 drought and its catastrophic consequences, initiatives were developed that curbed the potentially severe famine in 2016 and 2017. The key was timely information and effective interagency cooperation across Somalia. This is the basis for forming the Disaster Operations Coordination Centre, working with the comprehensive recovery and resilience framework for Somalia. It is also important that the role of an environmental security adviser was created, so as to address the need for coordination. UNSOM is therefore taking steps to address climate-related risks. Together with the United Nations country team, what more can it do?

First, the Mission can focus on improving coordination between the Government and humanitarian and security actors, both Somali and international. To be sure, care must be taken not to undermine humanitarian neutrality, but assistance in a humanitarian emergency

can be accepted from different quarters. Preparation for this will reduce the impact of future shocks and can be done without compromising humanitarian principles.

Secondly, it can remain alert to the need to adapt its response structures to evolving conditions. Part of its long-term strategy and part of the recovery and resilience framework for Somalia should be to build the capacity to receive, process, disseminate and act upon information that reflects the changing on-the-ground realities in the dual context of a changing climate and protracted conflicts.

Thirdly, climate and climate change cross national boundaries and so does the impact. Broader regional responses are required. Through the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, appropriate inter-State frameworks exist, with which UNSOM can cooperate.

If I may, our report also contains relevant input for similar United Nations missions in vulnerable areas. Accordingly, and fourthly, the case of UNSOM in Somalia exemplifies what we have also identified in other operations in the Sahel, in the Middle East and in Asia — the imperative of preparing now for climate impacts. The first step is to increase capacity to assess climate-related security risks. A good starting point is to step up the dialogue on this issue among United Nations agencies working in-country. It is or should be a central plank of the sustaining peace and conflict prevention agenda.

Fifthly, by increasing information exchange between missions, knowledge about what works and what does not will be brought together and can be more widely shared.

And sixthly, dare we say it, we should dare to find new responses. Some tried and tested measures are still relevant, but, all other things being equal, a changing world requires some new responses. Knowing what does not work means it is time to find something new, even experimentally.

Finally, there are implications for the wider United Nations system. To synthesize climate-risk-assessment capacity, risk-assessment information should be made available to those that need it via the United Nations system and the climate security mechanism; we must ensure that the training of peacebuilding personnel includes a specific focus on climate sensitivity; and lastly, we must carry out the systems adjustments

needed so that funding streams can support integrated responses to climate-related security risks and prioritize programmes that promote climate resilience.

In sum, the case of Somalia shows us the future of peacebuilding. There are practical steps decision makers can take to address the negative impact of today's environmental crises to improve tomorrow's prospects for peace and security. UNSOM and the Federal Government of Somalia have both made important steps in this direction, and there is room for more.

I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Security Council, whose attention is greatly appreciated.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Smith for his briefing.

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

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I would like to thank our briefers. I thought Dan Smith's briefing was particularly interesting. It is a helpful reminder that it is rarely the case in States like Somalia that all of a country's problems can be fixed through a top-down political process in smoke-filled rooms in the capital city and that actually a bottom-up community-based wider contextual understanding is important. I thought Mr. Smith's point around the need for the Security Council to think about conflict prevention is something that we struggle with sometimes. Thinking climate risk is part of that. The data input is also a very important aspect; I hope we can take that forward collectively.

Let me start with one of the most positive elements to arise recently and congratulate the Government of Somalia on reaching the major milestone of eligibility for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and let me commend the cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states on the financial reforms that have enabled them to reach this milestone. It is vital now that this cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states deepens and extends to political and security reform, which will allow Somalia to fulfil the criteria necessary for debt relief.

Let me also welcome the recent enactment of the electoral law, which President Farmajo has noted was "a chance to execute democratic rights for one-person one-vote in the forthcoming 2021 elections". But

that is only the first step. There are essential aspects of the elections that are still unresolved, and we are concerned about spoilers trying to push the process off track. It is therefore vital that the Somali Parliament take urgent steps to make progress on the passage of the amendments to the Political Parties Law, which will allow parties to register for the elections and to address other unresolved questions in the electoral law, including the definition of constituencies, the allocation of seats to constituencies, how the 30 per cent quota of seats for women — to which Somalia has committed — will be implemented and the management of seats in Banaadir and Somaliland. These questions need to be answered in order to make the electoral law technically implementable and fundable if we are to deliver peaceful, inclusive, credible and transparent one-person one-vote elections, in line with the provisional Constitution of Somalia.

We regret that the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) is unable to operate freely in all federal member states. The NIEC is an independent and impartial technical body empowered by the Constitution, and we call on Somali authorities at all levels to cooperate fully with the NIEC, to admit the registration of political parties and to take steps to ensure media freedoms.

That is an example of one of the problems currently facing us in Somalia. We believe that it is primarily through dialogue and cooperation between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states that a resolution can be reached. That is simply essential to achieving a peaceful and agreed process for the transition of power. Elections are a crucial step towards a political settlement in Somalia and a broader constitutional review. We therefore call on the Federal Government and the federal member states to engage constructively and urgently in consensus building in order to agree on how the electoral model will be implemented.

In order to ensure broader stability in Somalia, we urge all stakeholders in Galmudug state to engage in dialogue on local reconciliation so as to preserve the significant efforts and progress of the last seven months. We are concerned that a divided Galmudug with multiple claims to leadership will be harder to govern, and compromise must be made to avoid the risk of instability and conflict. We also urge all parties in Jubaland to ease tensions and address differences through dialogue and compromise.

Let me turn to security and security reform. We are at a critical juncture in discussions on the long-term future of international support to Somali security and how we can support Somalia in taking the lead. The Council mandated an independent review of Somali security after 2021, and we urge regional partners to engage in consultations with Somalia, the United Nations and the African Union to help deliver a joint and unified solution for a post-2021 security model in Somalia. Rapid progress on security reforms is vital, including commitment to the delivery of a Somali-led transition plan and the implementation of a national security architecture. It is crucial that the drawdown of troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) happen in line with the threat assessments on the ground. This approach was not taken last time and it had a negative impact, so better consultation is important.

We remain concerned about the ongoing climate- and conflict-induced humanitarian crisis. The current desert locust crisis in Somalia and the wider region is extremely worrying and the United Kingdom is coordinating closely with partners to limit the locust infestation and mitigate the impact of crop losses through surveillance and spraying operations. We call on the international community to provide more funding for the humanitarian response and to step up efforts to build resilience and long-term climate-mitigation initiatives in Somalia. I note that in the past 12 months, the United Kingdom has given over \$400 million to the various humanitarian, political and security requirements in Somalia.

Finally, let me pay tribute to the United Nations for its continued support under the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia. We pay tribute to the ongoing commitment and sacrifices of AMISOM troop-contributing countries and, of course, the Somali national security forces in their fight against Al-Shabaab. They are brave and tenacious men and women who are fighting for the security not only of Somalia but of the region and us all.

Somalia and its international supporters face a huge task in the coming years in delivering inclusive national elections and a transition to Somali-led security. The United Kingdom will continue to stand firmly alongside Somalia, the United Nations and the African Union in those efforts. But without substantial progress, both on elections and on consensus-building between the different levels of Government, there is a

risk that our next discussion on Somalia will be a much more difficult discussion. So, let us do everything we can to prevent that from happening.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Swan for his briefing today. The United States deeply appreciates his commitment to advancing security, stability and development in Somalia. I also thank the other two briefers for their presentations today.

This year is a critical year as Somalia seeks the economic growth and development promised by debt relief, inclusive peaceful and credible national elections and progress towards the transfer of security responsibilities from the forces of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to those of Somalia. While those developments each hold tremendous promise for the Somali people, realizing them will require the full commitment of the Government and the people of Somalia.

We congratulate Somalia on its commitment to implementing fiscal reforms towards debt relief. The recent announcement by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that Somalia is eligible for debt forgiveness is a significant step towards faster economic growth, more grants and investments, increased Government revenue and expanded services for its citizens. In order to ensure progress on debt relief, we urge the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states to agree on financial accountability and revenue-sharing principles.

Looking to elections planned for this year, we recognize that Somalia is in a difficult phase in its journey towards democracy, with previous elections marked by limited participation, clan quotas, corruption and threats of violence. Recent elections in Jubaland, South-West state and Galmudug had their flaws, but we are encouraged that many candidates refrained from violence and demonstrated commitment to a peaceful, negotiated reconciliation process. We are troubled that some electoral models under consideration for 2020 and 2021 are not practical, could exclude key communities or might provide a pretext for delaying the elections. We urge the Federal Government and federal member states to work together to keep elections on track this year and agree on a practical model for peaceful, timely, inclusive and credible elections.

Al-Shabaab remains a deadly and destabilizing force within Somalia and across the region. We extend

our deepest condolences for those killed and injured in recent attacks in Mogadishu and Kenya, and we reaffirm our commitment to working with our partners to use all means to defeat those terrorists and extremists.

Since the Council met on this issue in November (see S/PV.8671), Somalia's armed forces and police have taken positive steps towards ownership of national security. We welcome the progress Somali security forces and AMISOM have made against Al-Shabaab in Lower Shabelle, but the operation has stalled. The Government must find a solution to generate capable forces and not allow reversals of recent security gains. We should acknowledge that the transition of security responsibilities to the Government of Somalia, which must remain a top priority, is behind schedule. AMISOM will not remain in Somalia forever.

We support the ongoing efforts of AMISOM's leadership and look to the Somali security forces and institutions to undertake the reforms and development that will enable them to assume responsibility from AMISOM, following the benchmarks and timeline of the Somali transition plan. At the end of February, AMISOM will draw down 1,000 peacekeeping troops, which is a critical step in this process.

Efforts to build capacity within Somalia's security forces, which give them the ability to hold areas freed from Al-Shabaab are tremendously valuable, and we extend our appreciation to Somalia's partners on the Council that are working to build those skills. Limited resources, institutional challenges and resistance to reforms continue to undermine Somalia's ability to generate new forces and take on additional responsibility for security. It is imperative that the Federal Government work to address those challenges as soon as possible.

We commend the President for appointing a new generation of Somali National Army (SNA) leadership focused on reforms, and we urge their full implementation. We also commend the work of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia and its support of AMISOM. We call for further accountability, efficiency and transparency in its operations.

The key to progress on all those fronts is improved cooperation and coordination between the Federal Government and its member states. The United States is deeply concerned that dissension between them has increased in recent months, and we have continued our outreach efforts to the Federal Government and

presidents of the member states. Greater rapprochement, dialogue and compromise will be necessary on all sides to ensure Somalia's security, stability and prosperity.

We commend the President for his outreach to leaders of member states, including recently to Somaliland President Abdi, and hope that it will lead to a broader reconciliation process. The deployment of SNA troops to a politically motivated offensive in the Gedo region of Jubaland is unacceptable and diverts resources from the agreed road map for security operations. It is imperative that the Federal Government and federal member state security services focus on combating Al-Shabaab rather than engaging in armed conflict with each other to resolve political disputes. We call on President Farmajo to end the Somali National Army offensive in Gedo and for both President Farmajo and Jubaland President Madobe to commit to dialogue and reconciliation.

Finally, we remain concerned by the continuing humanitarian emergency in Somalia, compounded by the severe locust outbreak affecting the region. With more than \$1 billion required for relief aid in 2020, we underscore the need for timely, reliable and more equitable humanitarian assistance and encourage other Governments to join us as we pledge ongoing humanitarian aid for Somalia.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the briefers for the information they provided today.

We welcome the progress made in the preparations for the 2020 and 2021 elections as well as the adoption of legislation outlined in the Mutual Accountability Framework. We note with concern the ongoing political impasse between the Federal Government and the leaders of the federal member states. We understand that overcoming that impasse must be a priority so as to support the reconciliation process and ensure a fair electoral process in Somalia. We call on the leaders to redouble their efforts to reach an agreement that addresses issues such as security, the constitutional review and the elections, among other national priorities. We welcome the positive developments in the subregion, resulting in the agreement signed by President Farmajo and President Kenyatta on restoring bilateral relations and the joint plan of action for 2020 and beyond between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia.

We welcome the adoption of the amended electoral law. We call for ensuring the 30 per cent quota of women

and a broad participation of the public, particularly young people, in the electoral process. In that context, we believe the adoption of the amended federal constitution to be essential and we urge the parties to continue working towards holding a constructive, inclusive and transparent dialogue.

The effects of climate change continue to pose a challenge to Somalia. The seasonal rains and rapid shifts to severe droughts, combined with the vulnerabilities and lack of resilience of communities, have resulted in a worrying increase in humanitarian needs in the country, where humanitarian assistance is needed to survive.

In that regard, we particularly appreciate the briefing by Mr. Dan Smith, who informed us about the effects of climate change on the security situation in Somalia and the great effort being made by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) to respond to the increasing impact of climate change on that country.

Somalia's vulnerability to climate change is reflected by the repercussions it has on the population, who are forced to flee their homes in search of basic services. In addition, those who have already been displaced due to conflict and violence are disproportionately impacted. That has increased the humanitarian needs of the population, including food insecurity.

It is therefore essential to continue to provide both the relevant authorities and those called on to support their efforts with the necessary tools for preparation, analysis and response regarding the negative impacts of climate change. As we are already seeing in Somalia, that would make it possible to comprehensively address the root causes of the current climate and humanitarian crises in the country and to provide sustainable solutions to them.

As on previous occasions, we would like to express our concern about the security situation in Somalia and the attacks perpetrated by the terrorist group Al-Shabaab, which continues to be the main source of violence in Somalia. We particularly condemn the attack on 28 December 2019 in Mogadishu, which killed 90 people, and we express our condolences.

In conclusion, we recognize the role that the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, the African Union Mission in Somalia and UNSOM have been playing in achieving lasting peace and stability in the country.

We are confident that the process of preparing for and holding future elections will be a gateway to a new stage of dialogue in Somalia that will promote the development of a participatory democracy and lasting solutions to the many challenges facing the Somali people.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Mr. James Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Mr. Francisco Madeira, Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia, for their comprehensive briefings. We would also like to thank Mr. Dan Smith, Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, for his briefing.

Russia fully supports the efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia to achieve domestic political and economic stability and to implement democratic changes. We continue to closely follow the situation in the country and the steps taken by its authorities to prepare for this year's key event — the general elections. We are pleased to note that the Somalis have managed to achieve progress in that regard. The most significant achievement was clearly last week's adoption of the very important electoral law.

We also welcome the consultations launched in Mogadishu earlier this month to revise the federal constitution. Furthermore, we would like to welcome the contribution of the Federal Government to normalizing the situation in the Horn of Africa as a whole. The reaffirmation at the end of January by President Mohamed Farmajo and the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea of their commitment to earlier agreements as well as the plan of action that they adopted are a good illustration of that. At the same time, much remains to be done. We trust that the Somalis will continue to honour their commitments.

We agree with the assessment in the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/121) that the lack of a constructive dialogue between Mogadishu and the federal member states remains a significant factor that hinders political progress and national reconciliation efforts in Somalia. Indeed, without the resumption of that dialogue, the numerous problems facing the country risk remaining unresolved. We call on the Somali authorities to step up their efforts to establish links with the authorities of Jubaland and Puntland and to resolve political differences in Galmudug. We believe that a significant contribution to resolving those issues

could be made by setting up a permanent mechanism for communication with the federal member states, including Somaliland.

Al-Shabaab continues to pose a major threat to the country's security. We are seriously concerned about the significant increase in terrorist activity by its fighters and their use of ever more sophisticated improvised explosive devices. In that regard, we would like to recall that in August 2019 our delegation asked the United Kingdom, as penholder on Somalia, to organize a briefing to the Council by the Director of United Nations Mine Action Service on the threat posed by those devices in Somalia; we could have heard from him today. However, unfortunately, our request fell on deaf ears.

We still believe that the issue of improvised explosive devices warrants just as much attention as other aspects of the situation that we have considered today. We are convinced that, in order to tackle the terrorist threat in Somalia, there is a need for effective joint efforts to build a unified national security architecture. Progress in this area should be decisive with a view to handing over responsibility for the security of the country to the Somalis themselves. The process should also take into account developments in the situation on the ground.

At the moment, we agree that the African Union Mission to Somalia is an extremely important player in fighting Al-Shabaab. The international community should continue to take steps to increase the operational readiness of the African peacekeeping units and the Somali National Army. Considering the complex humanitarian situation in Somalia, Russia continues to provide assistance to the country and to Somali refugees in neighbouring countries. We do so through targeted contributions to the relevant funds of the World Food Programme. We also intend to continue to train Somali civilian personnel.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Council of our country's firm commitment to continue working intensively in the Security Council to resolve the crisis in Somalia, while respecting the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): First of all, let me thank our three briefers for their insightful remarks and comments.

Germany wholeheartedly supports the efforts by the Somali Government to ensure peace, stability and

development in Somalia. In that context, we underscore that credible, free and fair elections in 2020 and 2021 are key to democratic State-building in Somalia. Following the elections in 2016 and 2017, a wide range of Somali leaders pledged to hold direct one-person one-vote elections in 2020 and 2021. Most recently, that was also reflected in the commitments of the Somali Government and stakeholders under the 2020 Mutual Accountability Framework.

We take note of the federal electoral bill signed into law by the Federal President last week. However, we also see that some paragraphs of the law are arguably not implementable, despite repeated and concrete advice on those issues provided to Parliament by the National Independent Electoral Commission and United Nations electoral experts. In addition, the electoral code leaves many important questions unresolved. Those questions need to be answered on the basis of broad political consensus and in full cooperation between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states in accordance with commitments made under the Mutual Accountability Framework.

Like others, we are highly concerned with regard to the current political situation in Galmudug and Jubaland. We call for the political settlement of tensions, which requires dialogue and compromise. Constructive political cooperation between the Federal Government and all federal member states must be given the highest priority. Unfortunately, we have not seen much progress over recent months, but coordination meetings should resume promptly and take place regularly in order to resolve outstanding issues. In the light of the 2020 elections, the political process, obviously, must noticeably catch up. On the issue of Somaliland, we also encourage both sides — Mogadishu and Hargeisa — to pursue the now-resumed dialogue.

On security, first of all, let me commend the progress made in the security sector. We pay tribute to the work and the sacrifices of the African Union Mission to Somalia and the Somali National Army. It is crucial to continue on that path in a coherent and coordinated manner. We need security sector reform and the implementation of the national security architecture and a security transition. The security of elections is equally important. But it is also important to pursue constructive discussions with all stakeholders on the future of international support to the Somali security sector over the months ahead, including with the perspective of the upcoming independent

assessment requested by the Security Council for early 2021. We need a credible and sustainable post-2021 security model for Somalia.

On the humanitarian situation and developments, Germany remains extremely concerned about the current humanitarian situation and about the additional challenges caused by the plague of locusts. We reacted swiftly by making available €3 billion to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to safeguard livelihoods, and will continue to monitor the situation very carefully.

To say a few words on the human rights situation, we noted that Amnesty International stated in its latest report that there had been a surge in violent attacks, threats, harassment and intimidation of media workers in Somalia. We are obviously concerned about that assessment and urge all stakeholders to respect the freedom of the press and to protect media workers.

We were very impressed by the report of Mr. Dan Smith and see very clearly the nexus he talked about. The aggravating consequences of climate change for Somalia's humanitarian situation and fragile statehood clearly demonstrate the challenges posed by climate change for regional stability and security.

However, climate-related risks are not the only drivers of conflict — I think we would all agree on that. But, at the same time, it is a reality that they represent one driver, and often a very significant one, of conflict, which we cannot ignore and, we feel, the Security Council should not ignore. Floods and droughts exacerbate conflicts. The analysis of the situation in Somalia would be incomplete without taking into account climate-related risks. Food insecurity and other insecurities give Al-Shabaab an opportunity to present themselves as alternative providers of security. There is therefore obviously a clear nexus between climate-related risks and insecurity. For us, all of this shows that there is substantial cause for concern about the effects of climate change on the security situation in Somalia.

At the same time, as we heard in today's briefings, climate change poses challenges to the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia. We are therefore convinced it is high time for the Security Council to duly take into account climate change as a factor relevant to peace and security. Germany is investing in strengthening capacity on climate and security in the field, inter alia

by financing the cost of an environment and security adviser who will support the United Nations in-country presence and provide information on climate-security risks in Somalia.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks the briefers, Mr. James Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, Mr. Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission to Somalia, and Mr. Dan Smith, Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, for their briefings.

Over the past three months, we have seen positive progress in Somalia's national reconstruction and the preparations for the late 2020 or early 2021 elections. The new electoral code was passed and signed into law, the ninth national development plan was unveiled and the tripartite summit with Eritrea and Ethiopia was held during, which the joint plan of action for 2020 and beyond was adopted.

China commends Somalia's efforts to promote international peace, stability and development and welcomes improved relations and cooperation among the countries of the Horn of Africa. In parallel to those developments, Somalia faces some persistent challenges in areas such as the political process, election preparations and socioeconomic development. Terrorism remains a threat to security, while natural phenomena, including floods and the plague of locusts, imperil the country's humanitarian situation. The international community should continue to closely follow the evolving situation in Somalia and provide constructive assistance on the basis of respect for Somali sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

First, we need to help Somalia improve its national governance capacity. The Security Council and the international community at large should uphold the principled position that the country's political process should be Somali-led and -owned, and, based on respect for the Somali Government's leadership, help the country move its political process forward, improve the development of the federal institutions, improve the relationship between the Federal Government and federal member state Governments and create enabling conditions for smooth and peaceful elections in late 2020 or early 2021.

Secondly, we need to strengthen Somalia's security capacity-building. The international community should continue to support the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia so that it can function better, as mandated, and provide it with stable, predictable and sustainable funding, help Somalia strengthen its security capacity-building and enable the Somali security forces to take over the responsibility for maintaining national security in phases.

Thirdly, we need to deepen cooperation among the United Nations, the African Union and countries of the region on the Somali issue. The international community should support African countries in resolving African issues the African way, and support regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, in playing a leading role in the political settlement of the Somali issue.

Fourthly, we need to focus efforts on tackling the root causes of conflict. Somalia has been ravaged by a protracted war, with devastating effects on its socioeconomic development. That is compounded by its significant lack of capacity to cope with climate change and natural disasters. It is necessary to take a sustainable development approach if we are to overcome food and security issues, as well as the humanitarian crisis in the context of climate change. The international community should step up its assistance in such areas as education, health, food security and infrastructure development to help Somalia achieve self-reliant sustainable development as soon as possible.

China has long been actively engaged in Somalia's peace process and has provided humanitarian assistance and socioeconomic development support to Somalia. In order to help Somalia respond to flooding, China recently provided tents, mosquito nets, emergency medical supplies and other in-kind assistance to Somalia. Along with the rest of the international community, China is ready to continue its constructive role in helping Somalia achieve peace, stability and development.

Mr. Michon (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank our three speakers for their briefings and to reiterate France's full support for the Special Representative. I would like to stress four points.

First, France is concerned about the stalemate in relations between the Somali Federal Government and certain federal member states, which has lasted more

than 18 months and is a major obstacle to the completion of crucial projects for Somalia. Dialogue must resume immediately, particularly between the Somali federal authorities and the authorities of Jubaland and Puntland. In that connection, we welcome the mediation efforts undertaken in December by the United Nations, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the European Union, but regret that the Somali authorities did not follow up on them.

Secondly, with regard to the 2020 and 2021 elections, France takes note of the enactment of the electoral law. While that is a positive step in furtherance of the commitments made at the latest Somalia Partnership Forum, uncertainties remain regarding key issues, in particular with regard to the definition of electoral constituencies, the representation of federal member states and the implementation of the 30 per cent quota for women, whose full and effective participation is essential. Those uncertainties must be quickly clarified so that the 2020 and 2021 elections can be held on schedule, in a peaceful, inclusive and transparent manner, and based on the principle of one-person, one-vote. We also call on the Somali authorities to broaden the democratic space so as to enable the participation of all political parties and civil society, and to lift all restrictions on the freedoms of expression and assembly.

Thirdly, with regard to the security situation, France remains concerned about the frequency of attacks by Al-Shabaab, particularly in Mogadishu. In that context, we note that it is critical to continue to implement the security transition plan from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to the Somali security forces. The Somali federal authorities must therefore step up their efforts if they hope to control the entire territory, including through the implementation of a credible force-generation plan and the integration of regional forces into the Somali National Army. With regard to AMISOM in particular, France is of the view that the European Union must of course continue to provide the Mission with financial support, but that, in return, the Somali federal authorities must speed up the implementation of security reforms and resume their cooperation with the federal member States. In that connection, we stand ready to participate actively in the discussions on future international engagement in Somalia after 2021. Those discussions must include all actors involved in Somalia.

Fourthly, with regard to climate change, France welcomes the briefing delivered by the Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). It is evident that climate change is a major factor in the conflict in Somalia. As explained by the SIPRI representative, episodes of drought followed by floods and, more recently, the invasion of locusts, both caused by climate disruption, significantly affect Somalia's humanitarian and security situation. As in many other places affected by climate change, the increase in the number of internally displaced persons and forced population displacements, combined with the scarcity of natural resources and food insecurity, are exacerbating tensions between displaced people and host communities and stoke the flames of intercommunal rivalries.

Unfortunately, this situation will likely recur in other regions of the world. That is why we believe that conflict prevention must fully integrate an analysis of the security impacts of climate change. In that context, we call on the United Nations to conduct a periodic analysis of the security risks of climate change throughout the world — not only areas of conflict — based on information provided by United Nations agencies and on their capacity for conflict analysis. As SIPRI did in the case of Somalia, such analyses must include recommendations for preventive measures to be implemented, first and foremost by the national authorities but also by development partners, regional organizations and United Nations agencies.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Mr. Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, and Mr. Smith, Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, for their comprehensive briefings.

The year 2020 is crucial for Somalia, as it embarks upon multisectoral reform, including the holding of universal suffrage elections, strengthening its security sector and promoting economic and social development. The Mutual Accountability Framework, agreed in October 2019, is important and ambitious. We hope for its continued implementation. In that connection, I would like to highlight three issues regarding the political, security, and humanitarian situations.

First, it is necessary to resolve the political impasse between the Federal Government and the federal member states. The key national priorities, as set out

in the Mutual Accountability Framework, require strong cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states. The two must engage in constructive dialogue to peacefully resolve all outstanding differences. Ending the political deadlock is essential to accelerating political progress, consensus-building, and reconciliation. We commend the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the African Union, the European Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to facilitate dialogue on how to achieve national priorities. We concur with the Secretary-General's view that the organization of elections in a timely and peaceful manner remains a priority for 2020. We therefore welcome the adoption of the electoral law and hope the 2020 electoral timeline can be met.

Secondly, we remain deeply concerned about the ongoing threat posed by Al-Shabaab. We condemn all its recent attacks, including those employing improvised explosive devices in Afgooye and Mogadishu, and would like to express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims. We welcome the completion of a joint threat assessment of security conditions on the ground. It is necessary to continue assessing the implications of the planned drawdown of an additional 1,000 personnel of the African Union Mission in Somalia later this month in order to ensure that the security gains achieved thus far will not be reversed. We are encouraged by the Government's commitment to the implementation of the transition plan, including the continued military operations, force-generation efforts and institutional capacity-building. We would like to reiterate the importance of accelerated and coordinated international assistance to support force-generation and capacity-building. That is crucial to producing a well-trained and -equipped Somali security force that is eventually able to take over security responsibilities.

Thirdly, it is important to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Somalia. Recent flooding has compounded the dire humanitarian situation, with an increasing number of people being displaced and in need of assistance. In this regard, we call on all international partners to provide the much-needed humanitarian relief and assistance so as to ensure the long-term recovery and resilience of the Somali people.

Lastly, I commend the Federal Government for demonstrating leadership and determination in implementing its reform agenda while tackling multidimensional challenges. I wish to reaffirm

Indonesia's respect for Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to pay the utmost tribute to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, the African Union Mission in Somalia and all actors working to ensure lasting peace and stability in Somalia.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African States members of the Security Council — the Niger, South Africa and Tunisia — and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

We would like to thank Mr. James Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and Mr. Dan Smith, Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

As Somalia embarks on a crucial year, the Niger, South Africa, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia commend the Federal Government of Somalia for its ongoing efforts and the progress it has made in stabilizing the country, including strengthening State institutions, improving the security situation and creating an enabling environment for pushing the political process forward. We hope that the Federal Government and the leaders of the federal member states will continue to engage so as to reach the necessary political agreement and build consensus and unity on key national priorities.

A constructive and inclusive dialogue would certainly enable the Somalis to adequately address the political, security, humanitarian and development challenges the country is facing. We therefore echo the call by the Secretary-General for the Somali leaders to consider instituting a mechanism for dialogue and consensus-building in order to advance the aspirations of the Somali people. We hope that such a dialogue will also help pave the way for the preparation and timely organization of peaceful national elections in 2020. We believe that the timely organization of peaceful national elections in 2020 as identified in the Mutual Accountability Framework is of the utmost importance for progress to continue to be achieved towards stabilization and the building of a functional federal State in Somalia.

We underscore the importance of engaging women and young people in the country's political life. Building a democratic and inclusive State will require their full

and meaningful participation in peacebuilding and State-building processes.

On the security situation, we appreciate the close cooperation of United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and AMISOM in support of the national security architecture agreement and transition plan with a view towards devising an inclusive security-sector approach that responds to the needs of the Somali people. However, we remain deeply concerned by the persistent terrorist threat that Al-Shabaab still poses, and we reiterate our strong condemnation of the attacks and all acts of terrorism and violent extremism perpetrated by that terrorist group. We are steadfast in our support for the Somali National Army, and we appreciate the support of AMISOM and other partners to continue working to reduce the capacities of Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups operating in Somalia.

We welcome the threat assessment of security conditions on the ground undertaken jointly by the United Nations, the African Union and the Federal Government and call on the international community to continue to provide the necessary security assistance to Somali authorities at both the federal and state levels, including in force-generation and capacity-building. In this respect, we reiterate our position that any reconfiguration or drawdown of AMISOM should be conditions-based and not lead to a security vacuum that will be exploited by terrorist groups and undermine the gains made in Somalia so far.

We commend the gains made during the military operations undertaken jointly by the Somali National Army and AMISOM in Lower Shabelle, resulting in several strategic areas recovered from Al-Shabaab. We urge the Federal Government to continue building the structures and capabilities of the Somali National Army to be effective and well-resourced in accordance with the transition plan in order to take over their responsibilities from AMISOM. We are convinced that these achievements will help create conditions favourable to Somalia being able to effectively assume the security responsibilities by 2021 and facilitate the holding of democratic elections in the country by the end of the year 2020. We appeal to the international community and partners to mobilize resources and replenish the Trust Fund for AMISOM, and we call on the Trust Fund to support the Somali security forces.

We express our concern about the humanitarian situation affecting millions of Somalis as a result of

adverse climatic conditions and terrorist threats. The climate has created propitious conditions for the locust invasion that is having a devastating impact on the agriculture sector of Somalia, leading to the declaration of a state of emergency this month. In this regard, it is imperative to take into consideration the impact of climate change. Urgent assistance is needed to develop adaptation and resilience measures in the country, and we call on the international community of donors to support Somalia to this end.

Finally, we commend the sustained efforts by the Federal Government over the years to ensure that Somalia becomes eligible for debt relief from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. This is a significant achievement that we hope will pave the way for further economic development in Somalia.

Mr. Auväärt (Estonia): I thank the briefers for their insightful overview of the latest developments in Somalia.

It is important that 2020 is used not only to consolidate the progress made thus far but to further it. Dialogue between the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states is a crucial priority to achieve progress on national priorities. Estonia joins the call to the country's leaders to take immediate steps to restore ties and consider instituting a mechanism for dialogue and consensus-building in the interest of the nation. This is crucial not only for the upcoming elections but also for the broader political, security, humanitarian and development challenges the country is facing, which cannot be solved unless there is constructive dialogue and strong unity of purpose between the Federal Government and the federal member states.

As identified in Mutual Accountability Framework, organization of timely, credible and peaceful national elections must remain the first priority for 2020. We recognize the profound progress already made towards direct elections and welcome the enactment of the electoral law. However, there are some concerns about the frameworks governing the elections. Gaps in the electoral law need to be addressed to ensure that it is implementable.

Among other important questions, such as the definition of the constituencies and the management of seats for Banaadir and Somaliland, Estonia emphasizes that female representation should be safeguarded in the elections, and the 30 per cent female representation

should be enshrined in legislation. Women must be equal partners in peace efforts.

Al-Shabaab's ability to conduct attacks in Somalia, including in Mogadishu, remains extremely concerning. Ensuring security for the Somali people is at the heart of our responsibilities, and therefore it is crucial that the drawdown of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops happen in line with the threat assessments on the ground. We condemn all grave violations committed against civilians, in particular against children, and the continued high numbers of child recruitment. We must also tackle conflict-related sexual violence, which remains pervasive across much of Somalia. In order to strengthen the legal frameworks, we call for the sexual offences bill to be passed by the Parliament.

Estonia is deeply concerned about the current humanitarian situation, including the recent locust invasion and the threat it poses to the fragile food-security situation. As we heard from the Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, climatic shocks continue to severely impact Somalia and require comprehensive solutions that offer prevention and threat mitigation. Estonia encourages further efforts in this line of work that will proactively address these threats.

Finally, I would like to express Estonia's support for the work of the United Nations in Somalia and to pay tribute to AMISOM and the Somali security forces for their efforts to make long-term peace and stability in Somalia a reality.

Mr. Dinh (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to thank this afternoon's three briefers for their informative and important statements.

In the period under consideration, there were positive developments in Somalia that have given rise to hope for greater security and stability. Viet Nam welcomes this and believes that with sustained efforts from the Government and regional and international partners, this progress will contribute to better promoting security and the livelihoods of the people.

Cautious optimism is required, however, and more efforts are needed. Traditional and non-traditional threats to stability and development remain a significant concern, mainly due to the unrelenting terrorist attacks by Al-Shabaab. Better synchronization between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states is also needed in the interests of

the implementation of the ambitious national priorities and, as Mr. Smith just noted, the country continues to be vulnerable to the adverse impact of climate change and various shortages. National food security and livelihoods are at risk amid the recent surge in desert locusts.

In this regard, we wish to make the following observations.

First, we support the efforts by the Government and other political leaders of Somalia for national unity and reconciliation. We join the call upon all parties concerned to make further efforts to engage in a constructive dialogue, for the sake of security, sustained stability and development in Somalia. We therefore commend the recent meetings between President Farmajo and other political leaders and look forward to their continued efforts and specific follow-up actions.

Secondly, we commend the progress made in the preparations for national elections in 2020, with the signing of the electoral bill on 21 February by the President of Somalia. It is significant that the bill allows all people and political parties, especially the political representation of women and minorities, to take part in the electoral process, including at least a 30 per cent minimum quota for women parliamentarians.

Thirdly, we strongly condemn all forms of violent extremism and terrorist attacks by Al-Shabaab in Mogadishu and the region against civilians, Government officials and international forces. We emphasize the need to step up efforts to counter the continued threats from terrorism and tackle the flow of illegal arms to terrorist groups. In addition, more effective security measures are needed to protect civilians, especially women and children. In this regard, we also welcome the recent engagement between the Government of Somalia and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992), concerning Somalia, and the Panel of Experts on Somalia.

Fourthly, the rapid shifts from severe drought to flooding have negative impacts on populations that are already vulnerable due to chronic poverty and conflict. We support the flood-response plan launched by the United Nations and the Federal Government of Somalia in December 2019, and we call on international partners to support the Federal Government in mitigating current and future risks and alleviating the suffering caused by weather-related crises. In that connection, we

cannot emphasize enough the need to address the deep-rooted economic issues facing Somalia, especially in agricultural development. Only by doing so can we help the Government and the people of Somalia overcome long-term challenges and maintain sustained stability and security.

Last but not least, we reiterate the importance of assistance from and coordination with regional and international partners in these important undertakings by the Somali Government. We commend the work of and reiterate our support for the African Union Mission in Somalia, the European Union Training Mission for Somalia, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations country team and Special Representative to continue their support for Somalia in maintaining peace and stability and ensuring further development.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Belgium.

First, I would like to say a few words on the political situation. Somalia is currently developing its federal system, and we understand how complex that task is. We commend the good technical cooperation between the federal levels undertaken with a view to obtaining debt relief. There is a need now to extend that cooperation to other areas and to add to it constructive dialogue at the political level.

Somalia is making progress on several crucial issues, including security-sector reform and preparing for the elections. However, in the absence of a domestic political dialogue, any solutions reached can only be incomplete. Some aspects of the electoral code must be reviewed, as has been noted. Time is of the essence in organizing the presidential elections as scheduled. We would also encourage the Federal Government to expand the democratic space in order to enable everyone to participate, including women, young people and displaced persons.

Finally, a just and reasonable solution must be found in order to ease those tensions linked to the regional elections in Galmudug and Jubaland.

Turning now to security matters, the insufficient dialogue between the Federal Government and some federal member states has also had a negative impact on the transition plan and the departure of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Better coordination will enable Somalia to make progress on

implementing its security architecture and the Somali National Army to increase its staff numbers.

Al-Shabaab remains the main threat to security and stability in the country. The deployment of the Somali National Army is crucial to containing this threat and protecting the population. Thanks to the partial lifting of the embargo, authorities are now able to obtain the necessary weapons.

I would also like to recall that the European Union supports Somalia by financing AMISOM, the European Union Training Mission for Somalia and the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia, as well as the anti-maritime-piracy Operation Atalanta.

The suffering of the population is of concern to us. Humanitarian crises and the displacement of persons as a result of conflicts and climate phenomena such as drought and floods exacerbate one another. The study presented by Mr. Smith highlights the interaction between those phenomena. We believe that if these were better taken into consideration by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), that would help to improve the effectiveness of the Mission.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the work of Special Representative Swan and the staff of UNSOM for their commitment.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Somalia.

Mr. Osman (Somalia): On behalf of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo and the Federal Government of Somalia, I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude and appreciation for the strong leadership shown by the Permanent Representative of Belgium as President of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to welcome the new members of the Council — Tunisia, the Niger, Viet Nam, Estonia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines — and wish them every success in fulfilling their mandates.

I would also like to take this opportunity to shine a light on and honour the 82 young lives that were cut short on 28 December at the Ex-control Junction in Mogadishu. Desperate attacks by terrorist groups do not diminish the resolve of the Government and people of Somalia as we continue in our quest for peace and stability. We thank the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for its sacrifices in that regard as it continues to fight alongside us.

The Federal Republic of Somalia reiterates its unwavering commitment to continuing to work closely with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia alongside AMISOM to ensure the transfer of primary security responsibility from AMISOM to Somalia. I therefore extend my gratitude to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ambassador Swan for his briefing as well as the increased understanding and close cooperation between my Government and the Mission. On the same note, I would also like to thank Ambassador Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of AMISOM, for his briefing and Mr. Dan Smith, Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, for his presentation on climate and the impact of climate change on security.

The current Government, which took office three years ago, embarked on comprehensive and ambitious cross-sectoral reforms. Given the challenges that we inherited as a Government, we overcame considerable obstacles and achieved progress within an extremely short period thanks to the strong partnership between the Federal Government of Somalia, the federal member states and our international partners. Together, we have worked to tackle some of the threats to Somalia's peace and security.

Our flagship reform agenda has been economic recovery through wide-ranging reforms with the ultimate goal of re-engaging with international financial institutions. Today that goal is very much within reach. We have achieved great success and undertaken unimaginable reforms, as we have made serious efforts to reconstruct and validate our external debt.

To further set the conditions for achieving debt relief, the Federal Government of Somalia recently adopted the ninth national development plan, which will act as our interim poverty reduction strategy — a blueprint for our economic development over the medium term. The plan aims to address the root causes of poverty and provide sustainable measures to improve the impacts of poverty experienced by Somalis across the country.

In that regard, Somalia welcomes the announcement by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank at their respective 12 and 13 February Board meetings of our eligibility for debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. That is a historic step forward and we thank the members of the international community for their support towards that achievement.

The decision point on debt relief is not an end to our quest for comprehensive economic reforms but, in fact, the beginning of a long-term process to steer our country out of poverty and to ensure that our people attain socioeconomic emancipation. It is not lost on us that further comprehensive reforms are still required to move from that decision point to the completion point. Today I assure the Council that the Somali leadership is committed to remaining steadfast and to concluding all necessary reforms to reach that goal. As members may know, under the new IMF programme, we have committed ourselves to a more stringent reform package.

We believe that such a path will allow for foreign direct investment that will not only benefit all Somalis but also diversify our economy, create jobs and ensure the ability of the Government to directly fund the provision of basic services. We have recently focused on a number of private-sector development reforms, such as the development of Somalia's company law and the establishment of the Somali Bureau of Standards. This week we hope that Somalia will become the 182nd member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, which protects and insulates potential international investors against any political and security risks. The proceeds of the debt relief will enhance socioeconomic inclusion, decentralize service provision and act as the single most unifying factor across the political strata.

Under extremely difficult circumstances, with the leadership of Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre, the Somali Government has made irreversible gains in security sector reforms. We have begun the task of reforming the Somali security forces, placing a special focus on their leadership, personnel, funding and logistics as we aim for able, affordable and accountable forces.

The greatest success is perhaps the management of the resources of the Somali national security forces through a system that is cashless, auditable, trackable and verifiable. Indeed, that enhanced accountability framework has seen the partial resumption of direct support to some of our forces by the United States and increased technical and physical support to our military from Turkey.

The Somali national security forces are currently in the midst of concluding the second phase of its reform plan, comprising a combination of human resources reform and investment in leadership. That will enable us to implement the newly approved pensions and gratuity

bill, which is awaiting the signature of the President, as well the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration solutions that we have begun to pursue.

Providing direct investment to the Somali security forces is the surest way for us to effectively and decisively deal with the threats that Al-Shabab poses to our citizens and allies throughout region. We have courageous, committed men and women in uniform who are willing to protect their people against a brutal enemy. However, we face shortages that, if overcome, would give our forces the requisite military advantage over an enemy that is desperately determined to survive.

We have nevertheless continued to make use of the capabilities at our disposal, together with the support of our international partners, to step up the fight against the insurgents. Operation Badbado in Lower Shabelle, borne out of that collaboration, has had a great impact on the infiltration of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices into the capital as well as on the necessary extension of governance and stabilization to that region. Similarly, in Lower Juba, the Somali National Army, supported by forces of the federal member states and our allies, has continued to push the terrorists out of their hideouts in preparation for wider clear-and-hold operations.

The Somali National Army has also begun to play a role in supporting the peacebuilding efforts, the latest example being with regard to the intercommunal conflict in Towfiiq and Af Barwaaqo. Thanks to the dedication and rapid deployment of the Somali national armed forces, a ceasefire initiated an immediate peacemaking process that was spearheaded by the community elders of both communities, supported by the Federal Government of Somalia. To mitigate such threats, the Federal Government has been working together with the federal member states to closely monitor such disputes and clashes through early warning prevention mechanisms.

As Somalia enters a critical phase of democratization, we require concerted efforts, both domestic and international, to unreservedly support the ongoing economic, political and security progress in order to ensure that vested interests do not find ways to undermine the tangible gains that we have made over the past few years.

Regarding our social reform agenda, the Federal Government of Somalia has increased the budgetary allocation to social sector reform and development by

200 per cent. This Government has demonstrated a track record in responding to the needs of our citizens. As we transition from decades of instability and insecurity, our health service providers are now providing basic medical care at the point of use.

Cultural identity relies on the memory of communities and individuals. Reviving our culture and heritage is a powerful tool for determining what the Somali people remember. After decades of conflict, the restoration of our symbolic cultural sites has instilled hope in the Somali people. We have renovated and restored many renowned landmarks, including a number of monuments, sports and cultural sites.

The Federal Government continues to build an inclusive political process across the country. Our efforts in Galmudug have borne fruit. Through a lengthy State-building process that entailed months of reconciliation, negotiation and setbacks, the people of Galmudug have finally managed to form an inclusive regional legislative assembly, which led to the election of the Speaker and, later, the President of the state Government. The regional leadership now faces the task of amicably addressing outstanding issues, bringing any disgruntled stakeholders on board and uniting the citizens of Galmudug.

The Government is committed to accommodating the democratization process and to continue building consensus around contentious issues requiring political debate going forward — a major shift from the norm that was built over the past two and a half decades. Politics is now becoming ever more issues-based, and future elections will be guided by programmatic linkages.

In the regional context, Somalia stands ready to play its part as a member of the global community in our fast-evolving world. Somalia remains determined to achieve the region's common objectives to empower ourselves for the betterment of our people. We will do so while recognizing the inherent rights for mutual respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity, including Somalia's.

Somalia believes the region can best succeed with more cooperation and less interference. That is why our President decided to play a leading role in the Horn of Africa initiative. As many members may be aware, the Horn of Africa's swift and crucial diplomatic turnaround was one of most significant and successful diplomatic developments in the African continent for

many years. That development will indeed pave the way for long-term stability in the region and has the potential to attract investors to the region while at the same time preventing the destabilizing effects of regional disputes from spilling over into Somalia. The Government of Somalia therefore calls on all external actors, especially those in our neighbourhood who are Security Council-mandated, to cease interfering in our domestic affairs and, rather, support the hard-won gains on the political, security and economic fronts, which would be beneficial to the entire region. According to the Charter of the United Nations, Article 2, paragraph 4,

“All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.”

The current electoral discussions are now at fever pitch. My President signed into law the electoral model approved by both houses of Parliament, firmly signalling the type of year we should expect. Debate has begun in earnest, and we are aware that the path will require candid engagement with all the different Somali stakeholders. I would like to assure the Council today that we are bound by and will respect the principle that the elections be held on time and the transfer of power be peaceful and orderly.

For the past three years, the rallying call of this Administration has been for a narrative change for Somalia, and for our partners to take greater risk in our country by believing in the hope and the spirit of the Somali people, who have endured so much. Since then, our collaborative relations have shown that real change happens when we work together to change mindsets, negate old narratives and make genuine tangible progress. I therefore urge our partners today to see us for what we can be. We must not be defined by our past challenges. The narrative of progression, positivity and reform that defined my Government over the past three years must be supported by all.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.