



Security Council

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Djani	(Indonesia)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
	China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Dominican Republic	Ms. Morrison González
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mangué
	France	Mr. Melki
	Germany	Mr. Heusgen
	Kuwait	Mr. Alahmad
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	South Africa	Mr. Mpanyane
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2019/393)

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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 Somalia (S/2019/393)

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in the meeting: Mr. Raisedon Zenenga, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia; Mr. Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia; and Ms. Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Mr. Zenenga and Mr. Madeira are joining this meeting via video-teleconference from Mogadishu.

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/2019/393, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zenenga.

Mr. Zenenga: Allow me to express my good wishes for the holy month of Ramadan.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) began the new year facing a security crisis as a result of the mortar attack on the United Nations compound on 1 January and a political crisis as a result of the expulsion of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Nicholas Haysom on the same day. The two incidents severely disrupted mandate implementation and the Mission's engagement with the Federal Government of Somalia. They also elevated the security risk level for United Nations personnel and left our staff deeply demoralized.

We immediately prioritized the safety and security of our staff, while concentrating our efforts on mending relations with the Federal Government and putting mandate implementation back on track. Working together with the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and the United Nations country team, we have taken measures to provide more secure accommodation and working space for our staff and to strengthen our resilience to mortar attacks. I thank UNSOS for the support that it has provided.

However, a lasting solution to the continuing security threat will come from denying Al-Shabaab the space and opportunities to prepare and launch attacks. The United Nations system and international partners are working together to enable the Somali security forces to take control of areas used to launch mortars and to support the implementation of a comprehensive Mogadishu security plan.

We are making good progress on resetting UNSOM's relations with the Federal Government. Building on Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo's visit to Mogadishu in February, my discussions with Prime Minister Hassan Khayre have been constructive. We have agreed on arrangements to restore and strengthen the Mission's engagement with the Government, and the Prime Minister has assured me of his commitment to strengthening the relationship ahead of the arrival of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

There will be challenges on the road ahead and there are still issues that will test the relationship with the Federal Government. But we are certainly in a better place than we were at the beginning of the year. Mandate implementation is back on track, particularly in the areas where we deliver technical support. Those include preparations for the 2020 elections, the constitutional review process, capacity-building of the police and contributing to the planning for ongoing security operations, including stabilization activities. Working together with other international partners, we are also using our good offices to encourage dialogue between the Federal Government and the federal member states.

Despite the challenging security environment and the recurrent political crises, as well as the capacity constraints and challenges of managing political obstacles to its reform agenda, Somalia has remained on a positive trajectory. During the reporting period the country made significant progress on its economic and

security sector reforms. There was also progress on the inclusive politics agenda, including the constitutional review process and preparations for the universal suffrage elections.

At the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in April, participants commended Somalia for the achievements on its economic reforms. The satisfactory completion of the third staff-monitored programme has enabled the design of a fourth such programme that will pave the way for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative decision point, anticipated in early 2020.

The Federal Government decided to apply the same rigorous approach to bring accountability and transparency to the security sector. For instance, biometric registration of all Somali National Army soldiers was completed on 3 March. All 16,000 registered soldiers now receive their salaries directly into their bank accounts. That has cut out middlemen and reduced corruption and ensures the regular payment of salaries to military personnel. It also paves the way for rightsizing the National Army.

In parallel with those security sector reforms, the Federal Government launched military operations in Lower Shabelle region to advance the transition plan, degrade Al-Shabaab in strongholds that are contiguous to Mogadishu and thereby stop the recent increase in Al-Shabaab attacks in Mogadishu. In an unprecedented development, the current military operations, supported by the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia, UNSOS and international partners, have catalysed joint planning and the systematic generation of capable, accountable, acceptable and affordable Somali National Army units. They have also demonstrated the value of a comprehensive approach to security by incorporating stabilization and policing elements in military operations and have reinvigorated implementation of the transition plan.

Technical preparations for universal suffrage elections in 2020 are making progress. The process of identifying potential voter registration sites began this month. The National Independent Electoral Commission opened offices in most of the federal member states. The draft political parties bill and the electoral bill were approved by the federal Cabinet and submitted to Parliament. However, the electoral bill remains a contentious issue with the federal member states. The adoption of those bills is absolutely essential for the

political road map to remain on track, and we urge all stakeholders to work towards reaching agreement that can be translated into parliamentary approval in the coming months.

A technical revision of 9 of the 15 chapters of the Somali Provisional Federal Constitution was undertaken. That is a significant achievement. However, progress will ultimately be measured against political agreements between the leaders of the Federal Government and the federal member states on key areas of the Constitution, including power- and resource-sharing.

Important progress has also been made on human rights. Following the violence that resulted in civilian casualties during the elections in South-West State last December, both the Federal Government and the South-West State authorities completed investigations into the killing of civilians. South-West State also conducted reconciliation meetings with the communities involved and agreed to pay reparations to the families of the victims.

On 18 May, the Federal Parliament ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The ratification will now go to the President for his signature. I congratulate the Federal Government on that important step to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

Somalia continues to grapple with significant challenges. The Federal Government's reform efforts have encountered inevitable resistance. The economic reforms and security sector reforms in particular entail dismantling a war economy that had flourished for decades. There are many vested interests, which pose obstacles to increased accountability. Taking on those vested interests requires not only the determination, which the Federal Government has shown, but also an inclusive approach of building relationships with all stakeholders to demonstrate that the reforms will yield benefits for the whole nation.

The full and sustainable implementation of Somalia's priorities hinges on the restoration of cooperation between the leadership of the Federal Government and the federal member states. While it was an important step towards the resumption of dialogue, the consultative meeting held between the leaders of the Federal Government and the federal member states in Garowe from 5 to 10 May failed to reach agreement on any of the substantive issues and on the date, format

and venue of the next meeting. Together with other international partners, we continue to encourage the Federal Government and federal member state leaders to urgently resume dialogue and cooperation, which are indispensable for the sustainable implementation of reforms.

The disputed electoral processes in Galmudug and Jubaland, scheduled respectively for July and August, were discussed during the consultative meeting. They have become a source of concern. As was the case in South West state last year, the risk of violence is very high. We continue to urge the federal and regional authorities to draw lessons from South West state, as well as good practices from the Puntland elections, and to manage disputes in the upcoming electoral processes in a manner that avoids conflict and ensures transparency and fairness.

The dialogue between Somalia and Somaliland, which also has implications for the completion of the constitutional review process, remains stalled. We are, however, encouraged by the remarks of Somaliland's President Muse Bihi Abdi on 18 May, expressing his readiness to promote peace with Puntland, including through the exchange of prisoners, and to cooperate with Somalia on issues related to security, trade and education.

The positive dynamics in the Horn of Africa region hold great opportunities for Somalia to realize its strategic and economic potential. However, the ongoing deterioration in relations between Somalia and Kenya, emanating from the maritime boundary dispute, is worrisome. It has implications for Somalia's State-building and peacebuilding efforts. Dialogue, not only between Kenya and Somalia but also with other member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, is essential for lowering tensions and for addressing the fundamental issues that have created the continuing tensions.

Somalia has immense opportunities to make further progress in the coming months. For that to happen, its leaders at the federal and subfederal levels must agree to work together in a spirit of consensus. Parliament must focus on passing priority legislation in a timely manner. All national stakeholders need to collaborate effectively in responding to the imminent drought and avert a famine. And key relationships, including with national stakeholders, international partners and regional Powers, both in the Horn of Africa and in the

Gulf, should be nurtured. The trajectory is upward and positive. We can all work together to energize Somalia's population and their international partners towards reform and progress.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Madeira.

Mr. Madeira: I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to address the Security Council on the situation in Somalia.

Allow me to start by expressing my condolences to the United Nations family and to the families of the 21 United Nations colleagues who perished in the Ethiopian air disaster in March. We at the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) pay tribute to them for their service to humankind and their efforts to make our world a better world.

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I would also like to pay tribute to AMISOM's former Acting Police Commissioner, Ms. Christine Alalo, who also perished in the March air crash. Her exceptional leadership qualities, commitment and passion were instrumental in the positive performance of AMISOM's police component in very challenging circumstances. She will be remembered for her valuable contribution to efforts for peace and stability on our continent.

In previous reporting periods, differences between the Federal Government and the federal member states overshadowed the political landscape in the country and warranted our collective and justified concern. Today in Somalia we are witnessing encouraging signs of political engagement. The inaugural ceremony of Mr. Saed Abdullahi Mohamed Deni as President of Puntland, in January, was a significant moment of gathering and collective reflection in that regard. The event brought to Garowe the entire Somali political class. Former Somali President Sheikh Sharif and Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, as well as leaders of the regional states, ministers, lawmakers and their national leaders, were in attendance. All without exception hailed the values of reconciliation and solidarity and appealed for the unity of the Somalian nation.

In his remarks during the event, President Abdullahi Farmajo called for forgiveness and collaboration and pledged that he will spare no effort in resolving the political stand-off between his Government and the federal member states. Since January this year, AMISOM has observed the gradual evolving of centre-periphery

relations. Both the Federal Government and federal member states are investing effort in dialogue to reset their relations. It is in the international community's interest to continue to encourage and harness the readiness of the Somali political stakeholders to engage with each other.

The encouraging atmosphere of dialogue was also witnessed on 11 March, when Prime Minister Hassan Khayre paid a working visit to Kismayo, where he spent a number of days as the guest of Mr. Madobe, regional President of Jubaland, with whom he discussed ways of advancing consensus in Somalia. Despite divided opinions about its outcome, the recently concluded week-long meeting in Garowe represents an important step in the right direction after a long time of absence of collaborative engagement between the Federal Government of Somalia and the regional member states. The African Union encouraged that effort as we look forward to a new round of talks to accelerate the implementation of Somalia's inclusive political agenda.

With regard to the constitutional review process, so far the two mandated constitutional bodies — the Joint Parliamentary Constitutional Review Oversight Committee and the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission — are delivering some progress. In that respect, AMISOM commends their efforts, particularly the series of strategy sessions, the most recent of which was the Djibouti session in March. A key outcome of the Djibouti session was the decision to expand the review process to the regions. That is part of a public outreach and consultation campaign on the provisional Constitution.

With regard to elections, the effort to speed up the review of the much-awaited electoral law and political party law was quite evident. In late April, the draft electoral law was tabled before the Cabinet and, on 2 May, endorsed and subsequently referred to the Federal Parliament. While AMISOM takes note of the initial reactions to the draft electoral law, it is of essence that all stakeholders intensify their interaction with a view to achieving the final adoption of those important bills in the coming months.

The work being done by the National Independent Electoral Commission to ensure that the universal elections in 2020-2021 are conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner is commendable. Over the past quarter, the Commission has registered progress on pre-voter registration preparations, including the

mapping of potential sites for that purpose across Somalia. Once concluded, it will fall to the Somali security forces and AMISOM to secure the locations.

In support of the National Independent Electoral Commission, AMISOM is working closely with its Chairperson and her team, particularly in the area of capacity-building. As part of that, and in line with AMISOM's new mandate under the African Union Peace and Security Council's communiqué from its 848th meeting, of 9 May, AMISOM recently agreed on a support package with the Commission. The package will include training on developing an electoral security strategy, electoral dispute resolution, and a training-the-trainers course on electoral security for the Somalia police force. We note with appreciation Prime Minister Khayre's appointment of a lead official to handle the issues related to the establishment of the federal electoral security task force.

On 1 April, a well-trained and equipped battalion of the Somali National Army, together with Danab special forces and AMISOM, successfully dislodged Al-Shabaab from Sabiid, a strategic bridge town in the fertile plains of the Shabelle River. A month later, the town of Bariire, sprawling on both sides of the Shabelle River, was also taken by another battalion of the Somali National Army, supported by AMISOM and partners.

For seven years, the town of Sabiid was a strategic stronghold of Al-Shabaab. It offered the extremist group a hub for assembling vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices that were routinely transported into Mogadishu and indiscriminately targeted, maimed and killed innocent Somali men, women and children. That stronghold has now been taken away from them. One month and three weeks later, the Somali National Army continues to hold the bridge town of Sabiid. The town is being rebuilt and stabilized. Ninety per cent of the population that fled the town at the time of occupation have now returned to their homes.

The Somali National Army is patrolling the streets of Sabiid, protecting population centres and securing critical infrastructure and sensitive sites. The Governor of Lower Shabelle is tirelessly in touch with the population, moving from village to village, listening to their needs and concerns and helping to address them. He has asked the population to identify a suitable person from among them to be appointed as administrator of the town.

The Government has put in place infrastructure to receive and distribute humanitarian assistance and attend to other pressing needs of the population. Humanitarian agencies are responding generously by availing themselves of and distributing emergency food items, medicines, water purification tablets, mosquito nets, blankets, iron and plastic sheets and other emergency requirements. Partners are reacting positively to the Government's appeal for quick-impact projects to open up roads, build schools, police stations and other public infrastructure, providing the population with sustainable sources of water, health services, schools, a marketplace and essential services.

What is happening in Lower Shabelle is a game-changer. A Government-led, coordinated and complementary joint intervention, conducted shoulder-to-shoulder with AMISOM, the United Nations, the European Union, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and other partners, is implementing a comprehensive approach to security in Sabiid and Bariire, under the transition plan.

The recovery of Sabiid represents an overall success for the Somali National Army, for AMISOM and for partners. Key to that success has been joint comprehensive planning and coordination, both in terms of military and civilian tasks. That approach and support for it need to be sustainable, predictable and assured so that Sabiid, Bariire and other towns that are going to be liberated from Al-Shabaab as a result of the implementation of the transition plan do not fall back into the hands of the extremist group.

While on the topic of stabilization and early-recovery activities, I am pleased to report that AMISOM will be scaling up its support to the residents of Sabiid. That follows an initial support package of non-food items to 600 households, consisting of 2,700 blankets, 2,700 plastic sheets and 3,050 mosquito nets. Our new focus, following interaction with Lower Shabelle stakeholders, will now be on Sabiid's immediate needs, as well as those of Bariire.

To further ensure that stabilization takes place, AMISOM welcomes the recent initiative announced by Prime Minister Khayre on 18 May on behalf of the Federal Government to align military and policing activities in Sabiid. In that regard, AMISOM stands ready to work with international partners, the Federal Government and South-West state to identify, screen

and train a local policing force, both in Sabiid and Bariire as well as other recovered areas.

If there is a lesson to be learned from Sabiid and Bariire, it is that successful Somali National Army-led operations under the right conditions are possible and achievable. Somalis have the capacity to take over responsibility for the security of their own country. Those conditions are: the ability of the Somali National Army to generate forces; a properly trained Army; a well-equipped Army; and guaranteed Army salaries. Fortunately, all those conditions were available and met prior to and during the Sabiid and Bariire operations. That is the way to go. We need to be sure that Somalia's security forces are equipped and supplied with essential hardware and means to contain Al-Shabaab. The group remains a potent threat, especially with its ability to recruit, self-finance and target Government officials, businesses and civilians. While we have been witnessing an intermittent downward trend in Al-Shabaab's operational activities, including mid-level defections, we must remain vigilant when it comes to the emerging threat of the Islamic State.

During the reporting period, we observed that the Islamic State might be exploiting Al-Shabaab's recent tactical shift. In that respect, AMISOM is assessing reports that the Islamic State is seeking to move into areas previously controlled by Al-Shabaab. Mindful of that threat, and as we approach the height of Ramadan, AMISOM, together with Somali partners, is prepared for any counter-attacks on Sabiid and Bariire and for reprisal attacks on Mogadishu. We are equally anticipating and putting in place measures to address Al-Shabaab's operations in their new locations across the Bay, Bakool and Hiran regions.

I would now like to turn to the status of the transition plan. It is now one year since the African Union Peace and Security Council endorsed the transition plan, in its 769th communiqué, of 30 April 2018. Since then, AMISOM has continued to register progress in implementing the transition plan, based on our available capabilities. On the operational pillar, AMISOM has successfully completed key tasks. We have transferred security responsibility for Mogadishu stadium to Somali security forces and recently, on 28 February, we handed over Jaalle Siyaad Barre Military Academy. Between mid-February and 5 April, we completed the drawdown of 1,000 troops. Meanwhile, in preparation for securing the main supply route between Mogadishu and Baidoa and recapturing Lego, we undertook key

shipping operations in Sabiid and Bariire, which I just spoke about.

As part of our comprehensive approach to security, AMISOM also registered a key milestone on the institutional capacity-building pillar. With the completion of the regional forces operational readiness assessment in mid-February, AMISOM remains clear about the trajectory of the transition and our final exit from Somalia, as guided by the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council. For that reason, it is important that we collectively address some of the key challenges affecting the implementation of the transition.

First, the Federal Government will need further assistance in generating the required troops to undertake joint operations with AMISOM, assume security responsibilities, hold territories and make sure that the population is with it and does not run away from it.

Secondly, the transition will need to see an accelerated inclusive political settlement between the Government and the regional states, as well as between clans, particularly agreements on resource- and power-sharing, governance, land issues, oversight structures and the integration of forces.

In resolution 2431 (2018), the Council directed AMISOM to develop a new concept of operations that would be aligned with supporting the implementation of the transition plan. That exercise was completed last November. However, to fully operationalize the concept of operations, AMISOM sector commanders met from 11 to 14 February with their Somali National Army counterparts in Mogadishu. The outcome of the sector commanders conference now forms the basis for AMISOM's reconfiguration of its military, police and civilian components. That includes dedicated implementation plans for all AMISOM sectors, taking into consideration the collapsing of forward-operating bases or handing them over to Somali security forces, and the creation of quick-reaction forces and mobile forces for the military component.

I am happy to report that, in line with the concept of operations, to date three AMISOM sectors have undergone reconfiguration, with the creation of quick-reaction forces and mobile forces. Operations are taking place in sectors a to 6. AMISOM also handed over its Afmadow forward operating base to the Jubaland security forces in April. In the coming weeks, as the

Somali security forces begin to increase their capacity to generate forces and assume security responsibilities, AMISOM will start its reconfiguration exercise across the remaining sectors, particularly in sector 5. We are currently discussing the modalities for the handing over of Warsheikh, in sector 5, to the Somali police force.

I am pleased to report that in addition to operationalizing AMISOM's concept of operations across all sectors, AMISOM has put in place a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. All AMISOM senior officials, starting with my deputy, are placed in different sectors to very closely follow developments and the implementation of the concept of operations and the challenges it faces, as well as to ensure that we support our commanders to make sure that we deliver on our transition plan. Our ability to track the progress of the concept of operations will now equip AMISOM with the data to make the required adjustments in terms of achieving the objective of the transition plan.

The Council recently received for its consideration the report of the Chairperson of the African Union on the fifth African Union-United Nations joint review of AMISOM under the African Union Peace and Security Council's 9 May communiqué. As highlighted in both of those documents, AMISOM has recorded significant progress in implementing the transition plan. In order to maintain that progress and ensure a comprehensive approach to security based on the outcomes of the 2018 joint review, AMISOM has deployed its civilian sector teams. The teams are now augmenting AMISOM's contribution to institutional capacity-building in the regional states, as well as broader stabilization and area recovery.

This new civilian effort must be supported and sustained in terms of human resources and logistics to be able to adequately support the transition implementation in the regional states. Similar to AMISOM civilians, the police component has also expanded its presence, providing operational support and training and mentoring to federal and regional police forces. Two additional formed police units and 67 individual police officers, as recommended by the fifth AU-United Nations joint review of AMISOM, will continue to enhance AMISOM's role in training and mentoring and, importantly, to support the elections in 2020-2021.

During the joint review in March, both the African Union and the United Nations took stock of

the implementation of the transition plan and agreed that, while AMISOM had made progress, outstanding tasks of the first phase still had to be completed before commencing the second phase in June. In that regard, it remains important that the Council take into account the joint review's option 1 proposal when considering AMISOM's future troop reductions. Allowing AMISOM to maintain its current troop level will enhance Somalia's security and consolidate the security gains achieved since the beginning of the transition. Consideration of option 1 will also create an enabling environment for the political process, including the provision of adequate security for Somalia's upcoming universal elections.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Mueller.

Ms. Mueller: I appreciate this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Somalia.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains among the most protracted crises in the world. Ongoing armed conflict and violence, as well as recurrent climatic shocks, continue to drive humanitarian needs. Governance challenges and underdevelopment compound fragility and make it difficult for communities to develop robust coping mechanisms. The 2019 humanitarian response plan, launched in January, identified 4.2 million Somalis — one third of the population — as being in need of life-saving assistance and protection. That shows a decline in needs from 2017, when famine was averted, raising hope that resilience activities led by the Government and development partners could make further gains. However, current humanitarian indicators across the country are showing deterioration. I would like to highlight three key areas of concern — first, the humanitarian impact of the ongoing drought; secondly, the situation of internally displaced persons; and, thirdly, protection.

On my first point, the humanitarian situation is rapidly deteriorating due to severe drought conditions that have spread from northern and central areas throughout the country. Two consecutive rainy seasons have failed, resulting in critical water shortages, widespread crop failure and diminished conditions for livestock. At this point in the season, any rainfall that is received will be too little and too late to reverse the impact of the drought.

Since February, acute food insecurity has already increased by 10 per cent. The situation is expected to worsen. By July, 5.4 million people — including 1 million children — will be unsure of where their next meal is coming from. This projection was made based on the forecast that Gu rains would rebound in May and June. But the rains did not rebound, and undoubtedly the number of people in need will continue to rise. Severe acute malnutrition rates among children are increasing rapidly, particularly among internally displaced persons. With limited access to clean water, there is a heightened risk of outbreaks of diseases.

We must act now to avert a major humanitarian crisis. Humanitarian partners stand ready to deliver aid to those most in need and are capable of rapidly scaling up responses, as was proven during famine-prevention efforts in 2017. But significant funding shortfalls are constraining response and leading to a reduction in assistance in critical areas, including health, nutrition, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene. More needs to be done.

To address needs arising from the drought, a scale-up in key life-saving areas is needed. On 20 May, the humanitarian country team for Somalia launched the 2019 drought response plan, which seeks \$710 million to respond to drought-induced needs between now and December. The majority of programming in the drought response plan is already included within the annual humanitarian response plan. The priorities of the humanitarian response plan are being reorganized and revised to account for the additional resources required to respond to the drought.

Donors have been contributing to the humanitarian response plan, which is today 20 per cent funded. I want to take this opportunity to thank donors for their continued support. In April, the Central Emergency Response Fund and the Somalia Humanitarian Fund allocated almost \$46 million towards the delivery of aid and scaling up of activities in drought-impacted areas in northern Somalia and towards the provision of life-saving assistance and protection in the southern and central regions of the country.

I believe I was invited to brief the Security Council today to draw attention to the elevated risk of a major humanitarian crisis unfolding on the horizon. The immediate scaling up of the humanitarian response is essential to mitigating the impact of the drought and to preventing the further breaking up of communities

that continue to be fragile from the drought in 2017. I encourage the international community to urgently increase support for life-saving drought-response efforts and to protect gains made in 2018. It is my hope that immediate resources will be received to help us prevent a dramatic crisis from escalating.

The repetitive nature of climatic shocks is a stark reminder that Somalia is becoming increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. To address the drivers of crisis in Somalia, greater investment is needed to strengthen the nexus between humanitarian action and development programming. We must focus our efforts on urgent life-saving responses, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that development efforts are critical to reaching the goal of ultimately bringing an end to the negative impact of these cycles.

Internal displacement is the second area of concern that I would like to address. There are more than 2.6 million internally displaced persons in Somalia, which ranks fourth in internal displacement globally. Displacement continues to be driven by ongoing armed conflict, climate shocks and the search for livelihood opportunities. As the severity of humanitarian needs is projected to worsen over the coming months, there will be a higher risk of drought-induced displacement and worsening protection challenges, particularly among women and children, as people are forced to leave their homes in search of aid and livelihood opportunities.

To minimize drought-related displacement, where possible, systems and structures are already in place to enable a rapid scale-up of response nearer to the hardest-hit regions. Conflict-induced displacement may also increase as a result of the drought because there is greater potential for communal and clan conflicts to arise over competition for scarce resources. Displaced communities are among the most vulnerable. They face multiple acute needs and are exposed to higher protection risks. Family separations make displaced women and girls especially vulnerable and exposed to sexual and gender-based violence.

Internally displaced persons are at increased risk of being evicted by force from settlement areas by landowners. In 2018, over 300,000 displaced people were forcibly evicted, which is a 36 per cent increase over the previous year. With the trends we have seen so far this year, we expect the evictions to continue. The forced evictions perpetuate cycles of displacement

and consistently undermine efforts toward self-reliance and resilience.

As to my third and final point, I would like to highlight the fact that the humanitarian situation in Somalia is a protection crisis. For years, Somali civilians have borne the brunt of ongoing armed conflict and violence that has continued to drive humanitarian needs and perpetuate internal displacement. Civilians are exposed to targeted assaults, assassinations and indiscriminate attacks. In grave violations, children continue to be killed and maimed. In 2018, Somalia recorded the highest rate of forced child recruitment globally.

There are increased protection risks in connection with the ongoing security reforms and implementation of the transition plan, including risks resulting from changes to the strength and posture of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Although the aim of the transition plan is the transfer of security responsibilities from AMISOM to Somali authorities, the success of the transition will depend on other important factors as well. It is essential that the Government of Somalia develop sufficient capacity to address the protection of civilians, implement appropriate governance structures and mechanisms, and strengthen civil authorities to ensure the delivery of basic services to communities.

Somalia continues to be a challenging operational environment for humanitarian organizations. Conflict, insecurity, bureaucratic constraints and limited logistic infrastructure hamper our ability to reach those in need. Targeted violence against entities with political, development and humanitarian mandates have to stop. So far this year, 18 violent incidents have affected humanitarian organizations, resulting in three deaths, two injuries and seven abductions. I encourage the Government of Somalia, with the support of international partners, to advance efforts that facilitate unimpeded humanitarian access to those in need, especially at this critical time.

Responding to the worsening humanitarian situation with life-saving interventions and protection remains a priority, but I must stress that the chronic vulnerabilities that underpin the crisis in Somalia cannot be addressed by the delivery of humanitarian aid. Progress in State-building and security, as well as greater investments in development initiatives aimed at building resilience, are essential to ultimately lifting Somalis out of need.

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

I now give the floor to members of the Council who wish to make a statement.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I extend a huge thank you to our briefers Mr. Zenenga, Mr. Madeira and the Assistant Secretary-General. It is very good to have them, as those are the first briefings that we have had since the mandate renewal of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (see S/PV.8494).

I would like to start by saying that when we had the last meeting, many of us noted that 2019 would be a very important year for Somalia. I might even go as far as to say that it could set the trend for Somalia's development for years to come. I think an important signifier of that is the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and we hope that he can assume his post soon. We also hope that, in turn, that becomes an opportunity to reset the United Nations-Somalia relationship and to find a way forward on the Panel of Experts.

The restoration of cooperation with the United Nations and the international community is very important. I know that the Somali Government has been thinking about that as well, and that is very welcome. The Assistant Secretary-General's last point shows why that is so critical. Somalia needs the guidance and technical capability of the United Nations to help it with some of the detailed issues that the Assistant Secretary-General mentioned. I would like to thank Mr. Zenenga for standing in and holding the fort down in the interregnum between the two Special Representatives of the Secretary-General.

It is important that, on an occasion like this, something be said about the bravery of AMISOM in Somalia, as well as the great efforts made by the African Union, which we appreciate. The United Nations, Somalia and international partners there need to work in tandem to deliver the transition plan. Working in tandem, in cooperation and coherently together is a vital part of the prospects for success, and we all want to get to a stage where Somalia leads on providing security for its people. The United Kingdom therefore really welcomes efforts to build the impetus in the AMISOM mandate renewal that is currently ongoing. But I would just stress that, in my experience, those things work best when troop numbers are aligned to the tasks that the troops must do, and not the other way around.

As I said, 2019 is important. In fact, the next 12 months are probably going to be critical to making progress on political, economic and security reforms ahead of the elections in 2020-2021. We all know that political agreements between the Federal Government and the federal member states are going to be at the heart of Somalia's stability and prosperity. In order to bring that about, it is very important that there be regular and constructive dialogue between the Federal Government and the federal member states, particularly on the constitutional review, the electoral law, the implementation of the security pact and the delivery of the transition plan.

I was interested to see the prospects for the Somalia Partnership Forum, which will meet this summer. I believe that the Council would find it useful to have regular meetings and briefings so that we can help chart progress. It is important that we think about how we can support all sides being able to fulfil the agreed partnership principles in the Forum. It would be very good to have a sense of where the United Nations sees the key priorities there and how they relate to the national development plan.

I would like to say a few words on the humanitarian situation. We wanted to have a humanitarian briefing because of the deterioration resulting from the drought. In some ways, the early warning indicators we see are worse than those we witnessed two years ago. We are about to announce additional support; we hope that others might be able to do likewise.

We all know that there is a real opportunity here to help Somalia get back on track, but it has many components, one of which is cooperation with the United Nations. Obviously, the transition plan is important — in fact, critical. Anything AMISOM can do to support transition priorities is also very critical.

Mr. Mpanyane (South Africa): South Africa wishes to thank Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Raïedon Zenenga, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia Francisco Madeira and Assistant Secretary-General Ursula Mueller for their briefings, as well as the Secretary-General António for his report (S/2019/393).

My delegation commends Secretary-General Guterres and the role that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSAM) and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSO) are playing.

have been playing in facilitating State-building and peacebuilding processes in Somalia, in line with the mandate provided by the Security Council. It is without a doubt that UNSOM and UNSOS, as well as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), have contributed positively to the prevailing development trajectory in Somalia.

South Africa welcomes the comprehensive reform agenda of the Federal Government of Somalia, which includes four road maps aimed at maintaining progress on inclusive politics, security and justice, economic recovery and social and human development.

Despite the efforts of AMISOM, UNSOM and UNSOS, together with the Somali security forces and international partners in the security sector, we note with serious concern that Al-Shabaab and other armed groups continue to be a source of instability in some parts of Somalia, including Mogadishu. The continued atrocities perpetrated by Al-Shabaab against civilians, Government facilities, Government officials, the Somali security forces and AMISOM personnel are alarming and must be condemned.

While we agree that, in the long term, Somalia needs to be able to take ownership of addressing its own security challenges, we also realize that the Federal Government of Somalia cannot do so on its own, given the capacity limitations of the Somali security forces. The area of capacity-building is one that requires sustained and coordinated international support. In that regard, South Africa calls for the continuation of the implementation of a comprehensive approach to security, encompassing international coordination and joint planning by AMISOM, the Federal Government, the federal member states, UNSOM, UNSOS and international partners, among others.

It is our firm view that sustained and inclusive dialogue between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states is imperative to resolving their differences in order to move the State-building and peacebuilding processes forward. Equally, there is pertinence in resolving the current stalemate between the two houses of the Federal Parliament. Cooperation between the two houses is important for the processing of the legislative framework envisaged in the implementation of the transition plan. We encourage State-building and peacebuilding processes to be inclusive, with the meaningful involvement of women and youth. We commend UNSOM for providing

assistance to the Somali authorities in promoting women and youth participation in the processes of State-building and peacebuilding.

South Africa is pleased with the notable progress made in the constitutional review process. We urge the Federal Government of Somalia to finalize the outstanding issues pertaining to the Constitution, with a view to adopting it before the holding of elections. The progress made towards finalizing a national reconciliation framework — the guiding document for nationwide reconciliation — is a welcome development. Furthermore, we commend the National Independent Electoral Commission for advancing preparations for voter registration for the 2020-2021 holding of elections.

With respect to humanitarian issues, continued support for the humanitarian situation in Somalia remains paramount. In that regard, we urge the international community to support the 2019 humanitarian response plan for Somalia in order for the humanitarian community to deliver the necessary services to civilians in need, including to ensure their security, issues relative to State-building and resilience, which Ms. Mueller mentioned earlier.

In conclusion, we want to commend AMISOM for its role in supporting the implementation of the Somali transition plan, as well as in training and capacitating the Somali national security forces.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank today's briefers.

Clearly, Somalia continues to face significant challenges on its path towards building a safe, stable and prosperous State. We strongly condemn recent attacks by Al-Shabaab and other terrorist elements and express our full support for the Somali Government, the African Union and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in that fight. We are pleased that progress is under way through political, security and constitutional reform efforts with support from the United Nations, the African Union and international partners. Advancing the implementation of those reforms offers the country the greatest hope for sustainable stability and economic growth. We note that none of those reforms would be possible without the contributions and sacrifices of AMISOM troop- and police-contributing members, which have provided the Federal Government of Somalia the necessary space and stability for the Government to develop the national security architecture and implement those reforms.

The transfer of security responsibilities from the African Union Mission in Somalia to the Somali national security forces is a top priority. We urge the Federal Government of Somalia to continue the efforts to generate and deploy security forces that will allow for a timely and orderly implementation of the transition plan. We underscore the need for all parties to coordinate closely to avoid security coverage gaps that could be exploited by malign actors.

With regard to Somalia's 2020-2021 elections, we urge the Government to finalize its draft electoral law to define a fair and transparent electoral system. We also emphasize the need for close coordination among the Government, AMISOM and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia to ensure voter security at each stage of the electoral preparation.

Concerning constitutional reform, we stress that long-term political stability depends on defining the relationships and divisions of power and responsibility between the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states. As such, we urge all governmental stakeholders to come together and finalize this critical reform.

With regard to the arms embargo, we have encouraged Somalia to engage productively with the Panel of Experts on Somalia and will continue to do so. Somalia appears to believe that the Security Council will eventually lift the sanctions despite a lack of engagement with the Panel. The United States will not support that view, which does nothing to address the problems that the sanction regime was designed to address and, indeed, undermines the actions of the Security Council.

Finally, as noted by Assistant Secretary-General Mueller, the ongoing humanitarian crisis affecting more than 5 million Somalis is an important backdrop to the political and security reforms that we have discussed. Since 2018, the United States has provided more than \$487 million in humanitarian assistance. We are working with the United Nations and other partners to provide critical food and nutrition assistance for nearly 1.5 million people across Somalia. We encourage continued international support on the humanitarian front.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Deputy Special Representative Zenenga; Mr. Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson

of the African Union (AU) Commission for Somalia; and Assistant Secretary-General Mueller for their briefings.

Since the end of last year, with the concerted efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia, the United Nations, the African Union and the rest of the international community, Somalia has seen positive progress in rebuilding the State, in particular with regard to security and capacity-building. China commends the Federal Government of Somalia, the relevant United Nations agencies on the ground and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for their efforts.

Somalia is an important country in the Horn of Africa. Maintaining peace and stability there is in the common interests of the region and the entire international community. Currently, the overall situation in Somalia remains complex and, looking forward, it faces challenges on multiple fronts. The Security Council, the United Nations and the international community should draw on past experiences and lessons in helping to address hotspot issues in Africa, such as this one, and step up support and assistance.

China would like to highlight the following three points.

First, we should fully respect and maintain the national ownership of the Federal Government of Somalia in its domestic affairs. We should respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Somalia, help establish an authoritative and capable Federal Government and optimize its federal institutions. We should strengthen communications and coordination with the Somalia Government, give full play to its own initiatives and improve its ability to achieve development independently.

Secondly, we should continue to support the efforts of the AU and other regional and subregional organizations that help maintain peace and security in Somalia. At present, Somalia continues to face serious threats posed by Al-Shabaab. It is necessary for AMISOM to maintain its deployment in Somalia. China supports the Security Council's extension of the AMISOM mandate and maintaining the necessary level of Mission forces in the country. We hope that the United Nations and the international community will provide stable, predictable and sustainable financial support for AMISOM and help the relevant troop-contributing countries build capacity in order to combat Al-Shabaab more effectively. At the same time, the international community should continue to help

Somalia improve its security capacity-building so as to ensure that the Somalia security forces will be able to assume security responsibilities from AMISOM in a gradual and steady manner.

Thirdly, we should continue to increase humanitarian assistance and social and economic development support for Somalia. The social and economic foundation in Somalia is weak. A relatively large gap in the provision of international humanitarian assistance remains. We hope that all international partners will honour their commitments in good faith and provide assistance in a timely manner. China will continue to actively support the Somalia peace process and play a constructive role in bringing peace, stability and development to Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the holding of this meeting on the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Somalia during the period from 14 December 2018 to 4 May 2019 and the implementation of the respective mandates of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSO).

We commend Mr. Raisedon Zenenga, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Officer-in-Charge of UNSOM; 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 Ms. Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their very informative briefings. Their briefings prompt my delegation to comment on the political, economic, security, humanitarian and human rights situations.

At the political level, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the recent initiatives to relaunch the political and reconciliation process between the Somali Federal Government and the federal member states, which had been interrupted for several months owing to deep differences. My country calls on the parties concerned to maintain this positive momentum and accelerate the implementation of the road map, including through the conclusion of agreements on sharing power and resources, the constitutional review and the establishment of Somalia's federal model. We also call on both chambers of the Federal Parliament to resolve

their disagreements and establish sincere cooperation in order to adopt urgent legislation, in particular the electoral law.

With regard to the economic situation, Côte d'Ivoire notes with satisfaction the outstanding progress made by the Federal Government in implementing its fiscal policy, particularly the significant improvement in tax collection through the expansion of the tax base and the strengthening of collection capacities. We encourage the Federal Government to redouble its efforts in the context of the implementation of the staff-monitored programme of the International Monetary Fund to consolidate economic growth and improve the living conditions of the Somali people.

With regard to the security situation, my delegation is concerned about the prevailing instability in Somalia and the continuing serious threat posed by Al-Shabaab, which is increasing its attacks and targeted killings, despite its setbacks. My country categorically condemns those attacks and calls on the Somali Government to intensify, with the support of the international community, its efforts to eradicate the threat posed by Al-Shabaab.

With regard to human rights, Côte d'Ivoire remains seriously concerned about the increase in the number of civilian victims and kidnappings attributed to Al-Shabaab, summary executions, violations of freedom of expression, sexual violence and violence against children. It calls on all parties concerned to respect, protect and promote human rights and calls for those who are responsible for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law to be held accountable. In that regard, my country welcomes the reaffirmation by the Prime Minister of Somalia, on 4 March, of his country's willingness to fulfil its human rights commitments as a newly elected member of the Human Rights Council as of October 2018.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, Côte d'Ivoire notes with deep concern the growing need for assistance and protection, which will affect 4.2 million people in 2019. That situation, which is the result of the ongoing conflict, food insecurity caused by a deficient rainy season and the subsequent increase in the number of displaced persons, calls on the international community to act. It is therefore imperative to quickly respond to the Secretary-General's appeal for funding for the 2019 humanitarian response plan, whose needs for the next six months are estimated at \$674 million. Our

mobilization would not only provide vital emergency assistance to many Somalis in distress, but also support them on the path to resilience and recovery.

In addition, my delegation is concerned about the increasingly difficult operational context in which humanitarian actors work, owing in particular to acts of violence committed against them and the growing number of obstacles along the main supply routes. It urges all stakeholders to protect humanitarian personnel and to promote the safe and unrestricted free passage of assistance.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire commends UNSOM for its indispensable role in providing strategic advice, good offices, capacity-building activities and coordination of the support provided by international partners. We also pay tribute to AMISOM personnel for the sacrifices made for security in Somalia. My delegation also reiterates its support for UNSOS and other international partners in Somalia. We encourage them to strengthen their cooperation in order to contribute to promoting reconciliation and peace in that country.

Mr. Ndong Mangué (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank your delegation, Mr. President, for scheduling this important meeting during the month of your presidency. I would also like to thank all this afternoon's briefers for their informative and comprehensive reports, which have given us a detailed overview of current events in Somalia.

Our delegation has been following very closely developments in the friendly and sisterly Federal Republic of Somalia. We are aware of the political impasse between the Federal Government and the federal member states, a situation that is reflected both in the previous report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/1149) and in that which we are considering today (S/2019/393). Somali politicians should make the effort necessary to overcome this situation, which is unworthy of a country in a process that is as delicate as this one. We therefore encourage the Somali political leaders to implement the reconciliation measures adopted in Garowe on 26 January.

Similarly, we call on the members of the two chambers of the Federal Parliament who stopped cooperating on 1 January this year to fulfil their obligations and resume cooperation in order to implement the parliamentary agenda and enact the laws

urgently needed by the Somali people and various areas of Somali society.

We welcome the comprehensive reform programme presented by the Federal Government in its effort to build a functional federal State structured around four road maps aimed at making further progress in the areas of inclusive politics, security and justice, economic recovery and social and human development. We urge the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union and other international partners to support this important programme.

We hope that in the new phase in which the Federal Government is entering, the limited political participation of women and their reduced role in decision-making areas will not continue as they are today. In that regard, we urge the federal and regional authorities, as well as civil society and the international community, to seek the more visible participation of women.

With regard to the issue of security, we deplore the ongoing bomb attacks and killings that the extremist group Al-Shabaab carries out regularly in Somalia, posing a potential threat that could sow chaos in Somalia and the Horn of Africa. We hope that the security reform provisions negotiated with international partners will be useful in diminishing that threat.

We regret the deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Somalia and hope that the reforms under way will pay more attention to those priorities.

We welcome the strengthened relations between Somalia and the other countries of the Horn of Africa, and we hope that those relations will be developed to promote sectors that are mutually beneficial for all countries in the region, such as the security sector, which is very important at this time of terrorist threats. We also encourage the efforts of the Presidents of Somalia and Kenya, who have begun the process of normalizing their relations. We hope that their Ambassadors will be able to return to their respective diplomatic posts, as stated by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of both States in Nairobi on 3 April.

Finally, I would like to thank the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) for its willingness to continue providing strategic support and advice to Somalia and the African Union Mission in Somalia on peacebuilding and State-building in

the areas of governance, security sector reform and constitutional review.

Given the fragile and unstable situation that the country is still experiencing, such support from UNSOM is crucial and will continue to be so in order to consolidate the results being achieved in a lasting and irreversible way.

Mr. Alahmad (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Raisedon Zenenga, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), for his important briefing on the efforts of the United Nations represented by UNSOM to achieve stability in Somalia and to support the Federal Government of Somalia in attaining peace and development for the Somali people.

I also thank 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), for his valuable briefing and the Mission's endeavours to maintain security and to rehabilitate the Somali national security forces. That demonstrates the importance which the Commission attaches to ensuring that Somalia is successful. We look forward to the Mission's renewal next week following the current negotiations on a draft resolution to extend its mandate.

I also thank Ms. Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for her briefing, which reflected the scale of human suffering faced by the Somali people for decades as a result of poverty, marginalization, armed violence, political instability, natural threats and underdevelopment. All of that has led to an increase in the humanitarian needs in Somalia, where one third of the population needs assistance and protection in 2019. In addition, food insecurity affects 4.9 million people and the number of internal displaced persons reached 2.6 million.

In late March, the Security Council issued a clear message that reflected once again its unity in terms of supporting and assisting Somalia by extending UNSOM's mandate unanimously under resolution 2461 (2019) (see S/PV.8494). That resolution is seen as an international instrument that demonstrates the support of the Council and the United Nations for Somalia in

building a federal State capable of overcoming the difficulties about which we have just heard from the briefers. The resolution took into consideration the special circumstances and the unique situation of the Somali crisis. Allow me to highlight the following main issues.

The first issue is the political developments. We welcome the significant progress made by the Somali Federal Government in ensuring stability, reconciliation and State-building despite many challenges that undermine achieving the required priorities. That is reflected in the fact that the Somali Government is keen to accelerate the implementation of the transition plan to which it is committed. We note the Government's road map in implementing its comprehensive political reform agenda, whose priorities are the review of the Provisional Constitution by the end of this year, the commitment to establish an electoral legal framework during the current session of Parliament and the adoption by the Council of Ministers of a temporary electoral law and the political parties act, as well as the National Independent Electoral Commission achieving progress in registering voters by using a biometric system.

The second issue is the security situation. The Al-Shabaab movement remains the main threat, as we have just heard from the briefers. We note the recent increase in the attacks and we reiterate our condemnation of such attacks, in particular those that targeted the United Nations compound near the airport in Mogadishu at the beginning of this year. In addition, other attacks targeted a number of hotels and centres, particularly those against the ministries of public works and labour, in which the Deputy Minister was killed. Such incidents show that it is important to step up efforts to ensure the implementation of the general security framework in order to promote the effectiveness of AMISOM operations and combat violent extremism. We welcome the joint United Nations and African Union review, which resulted in a new AMISOM concept of operations, in line with the transition plan and national security architecture, accompanied by the gradual decrease in Mission personnel.

The third issue is the economic developments. We welcome the progress achieved by Somalia in terms of economic development. We hope that this positive momentum will lead Somalia to meeting the required conditions as a heavily indebted poor country. It is clear that the Federal Government has started to produce results through capacity-building in order to increase

its local resources and revenue, as recognized by the International Monetary Fund. We look forward to further progress through the adoption of accountability and anti-corruption legislation, as well as the adoption of the necessary structural adjustments of the Central Bank after the recent appointment of its Governor. That is an additional step towards achieving the goals of economic reform.

In conclusion, we all know that this is in particular an extremely important year in terms of implementing pending political agreements and strengthening federal institutions. That means that we, as Council members, have a particular responsibility to implement our common vision in order to help the Somalis build an inclusive federal Somali State that upholds the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all its citizens.

Mr. Melki (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the briefers for their very detailed presentations. I will make three key points.

First, in the context of a fragile security and humanitarian situation, we are concerned about the delays in implementing the transition plan and the commitments made in the security agreement signed in London in May 2017, as well as in the integration of regional forces into the national security architecture, as highlighted in the report of the United Nations-African Union (AU) joint review of the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

The resumption of a constructive dialogue between the Somali Federal Government and the federal member states is also necessary in order to bring to a successful conclusion as soon as possible the work on federalism, the constitutional review and the preparation of the elections scheduled for 2020 to 2021. The economic progress made by the Somali authorities shows that when there is the political will, genuine progress is possible. We would have liked that political will to have been more clearly reflected at the recent Garowe meeting in Puntland, which we nevertheless hope will pave the way for the resumption of an effective dialogue.

Secondly, for the security transition to be successful, we believe that AMISOM must continue its reconfiguration in support of the transition plan. I take this opportunity to pay a warm tribute to the work of AMISOM, whose staff are deployed in a particularly difficult context. The ongoing Badbaado operation, in which AMISOM is supporting the Somali army in the liberation of areas in southern Mogadishu, is an example

of good cooperation in support of the implementation of the transition plan.

In that context, we believe that it is possible and necessary to continue a moderate reduction in the AMISOM troop ceiling in order to continue to encourage implementation of the security transition. It is not a matter of withdrawing troops from particularly sensitive areas or from Mogadishu but from more stable areas. We also believe that it is essential that new partners, in particular those identified in the report of the United Nations and African Union Special Envoys on the financing of AMISOM, commit themselves and participate in the such financing. Given with the number of requests for support from the African Union, the European Union cannot continue to finance the salaries of AMISOM soldiers alone.

Finally, and this is my third and last point, I would like to return to the issue of the cooperation of the Somali authorities with the United Nations. If the international community is to continue to support Somalia, that support must be in the context of cooperation based on shared commitments and mutual respect. That is the approach adopted by the European Union and its member States. We therefore look forward to a resumption of the full cooperation of the Somali federal authorities with the United Nations, as requested by the Council in resolution 2461 (2019) on UNSOM, in particular when the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General is appointed, an appointment that we hope will soon be made.

I would to conclude by asking our briefers a question. Can they inform us of the prospects for implementing the transition plan and for integrating regional forces into the national security architecture?

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. We also thank Mr. Raisedon Zenenga, Ms. Ursula Mueller and Mr. Francisco Caetano Madeira for their important briefings.

The most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/393) highlights the important steps taken by the Federal Government of Somalia to build a functioning federal State. We hope that the reform programme presented by the Government will make it possible to move towards an inclusive policy, achieve security and justice and bring about economic recovery and sustainable development. We commend the Government's financial management, which in recent

years has resulted in increased revenue. However, it is worrisome that a large part of the population remains vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity and that 90 per cent of households lack access to basic services, such as education, water and sanitation.

Those challenges are compounded, *inter alia*, by the persistence of violent extremism, terrorism and armed conflict. We note with concern that Al-Shabaab's improvised explosive device attacks increased in recent months. We firmly condemn such terrorist attacks and pay tribute to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali security forces for their courage and sacrifice. We must remember that only through cooperation and reconciliation will the people of Somalia be able to confront those challenges. In that regard, the recent steps taken by the Federal Government and the federal member states to promote dialogue and reconciliation, such as the meeting in Garowe, Puntland, in January, are encouraging. We hope that those steps will mark the beginning of sustained political dialogue that will allow for further progress in the implementation of political priorities, such as the holding of elections according to schedule, the constitutional review process, federalism and reconciliation.

We reiterate the importance of promoting the active participation of women in the political life of the country, as well as in the social and economic spheres. We hope that the reforms to be undertaken by the Government will include provisions with a gender perspective.

We are concerned about the grave humanitarian situation of millions of Somalis, in particular internally displaced persons and marginalized communities, which could be exacerbated by the expected drought. We believe that the international community must increase its financial support and that it should be complemented by predictable aid for building resilience and for recovery efforts.

With regard to the AMISOM joint review to assess progress in the transition to security in Somalia, our country supports the recommendations of the joint review team. We believe that, at this stage, it will be important to maintain AMISOM's troop strength, while taking into account the current security conditions and delays in the implementation of the transition plan. The reconfiguration of AMISOM and the transfer of sites to Somali security institutions must be conducted while

taking into account the humanitarian consequences and ensuring the protection of the civilian population.

I would like to conclude by highlighting the work of AMISOM, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia in support of the efforts of the Somali authorities and people to achieve peace and stability. I would also like to highlight the efforts of the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the United Nations.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Allow me to begin by thanking our briefers today for their very informative presentations.

Poland welcomes the progress achieved so far in Somalia towards peacebuilding and State-building and commends the ambitious reform agenda set by the Federal Government. At the same time, we are aware of the fragility of the situation. We are deeply worried about the growing number of Al-Shabaab attacks and the increased presence in Somalia of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

We are concerned as well about the political impasse between the Federal Government and the federal member states and the suspension of cooperation between the two houses of the Federal Parliament. The ongoing stalemate puts at risk the gains made to date in Somalia and threatens the timelines for crucial reforms, as well as the whole federalization process. We call on all political actors in Somalia to undertake reconciliatory and confidence-building steps and engage in a constructive dialogue for the benefit of the Somali population. We also call on foreign and regional actors to provide impartial support for the national reconciliation process. At the same time, we request that Somali authorities cooperate with United Nations actors based on mutual trust and respect.

The protection of human rights and freedoms is an essential part of democracy. We note with concern reports on human rights violations committed not only by Al-Shabaab but also by Government and regional forces and clan militias. We are particularly worried about reports concerning the recruitment of children. We find it unacceptable and call on authorities to intensify efforts aimed at raising awareness on child protection and strengthening policies for preventing the recruitment of children into Somali forces.

Poland believes that the success of the ambitious reform agenda and the development of Somalia require the concerted efforts of all actors, as well as international coordination. We see the comprehensive approach to security as an important framework for the alignment of donor support with the priorities set by Somali authorities.

Let me conclude by expressing Poland's appreciation for United Nations actors and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for their everyday efforts and sacrifice. On the eve of AMISOM's mandate renewal, we believe that AMISOM's drawdown plan should include specific steps and a realistic timetable for the transfer of responsibility from the Mission to the Somali National Army. At the same time, the need for burden-sharing with regard to AMISOM's financing has become more pressing than ever.

Ms. Morrison González (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. Zenenga, Ms. Mueller and Mr. Madeira for the information they provided today.

We welcome the efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia to develop and approve the draft framework for national reconciliation, with the goal of ending the violence and restoring trust among communities in order to overcome differences. Therefore, we ask the parties, in particular Somali leaders, to make every effort to find a peaceful and lasting solution to their political differences.

We note the political stalemate between the Federal Government and the federal member states. We understand that breaking the impasse should be the priority objective to support the national reconciliation process taking place in Somali society. We also express our deep concern about the fragility of security in Somalia and condemn the attacks perpetrated by the terrorist group Al-Shabaab.

We welcome the progress made in the constitutional review process and urge actors to continue to make the necessary efforts to ensure that its review is inclusive and transparent and guarantees the participation of all sectors of society. In that regard, more progress must be made in approving the draft electoral law based on the principle of proportionality and inclusion, including adding provisions that provide more opportunities for women. We realize that it is essential to continue working together to increase women's political participation and share of power so that they are involved at every level,

which is why increasing the electoral law's gender quota is crucial to achieving a minimum of 30 per cent seats for women in the 2020 elections.

With regard to young people in Somalia, we note that 70 per cent of the population is under the age of 30 and that the youth unemployment rate is one of the highest in the world. The lack of job opportunities and social and recreational activities makes young people even more vulnerable, driving young people into conflicts and participation in radical groups or piracy as a way to survive. We encourage the continued implementation of programmes that promote comprehensive change in the lives of young people so that they can find opportunities and achieve their potential.

The Dominican Republic urges the parties to continue working to end the recruitment and exploitation of children, to secure their release, reintegration and appropriate compensation, as well as pardoning children who have been sentenced to prison for their association with armed groups. We urge all the entities concerned with the protection of civilians in Somalia to redouble their efforts to create the mechanisms needed to protect the most vulnerable among them, particularly the internally displaced and women and children, who are exposed to high levels of insecurity and violence.

The effects of climate change, manifested in a serious drought, continue to be a challenge for Somalia. Added to communities' vulnerabilities and lack of resilience, those effects have resulted in a worrying increase in humanitarian needs in a country where a third of the population needs assistance to survive. Food insecurity, caused largely by adverse weather conditions and the loss of crops and livestock, continues to threaten the lives of 1.5 million people, mainly children. In that regard, we are very concerned about the difficulties that humanitarian actors are encountering in their efforts to access vulnerable areas, where they increasingly end up becoming victims of violence, kidnappings or movement restrictions both within and outside the areas where humanitarian assistance is needed. We welcome the efforts of State and local authorities in monitoring and implementing humanitarian programmes, and we understand that it is essential to ensure that the international community redoubles its cooperative efforts, which is why we suggest that those who are in a position to do so contribute to the Somalia Humanitarian Fund, with a view to alleviating the greatest humanitarian needs in Somalia.

Lastly, I would like to highlight and acknowledge the roles that the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, the African Union Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia have played. I would also like to acknowledge all the actors who have been working alongside the authorities in order to achieve lasting and sustainable peace and stability in Somalia.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytsverve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank all the speakers for their briefings.

Despite the fact that Somalia is going through difficulties, we should also acknowledge the positive developments there and the efforts that have been undertaken. For example, we can probably call the meeting held in Garowe from 4 to 12 May between the Federal President and the regional presidents encouraging even if the hoped-for results have not yet been materialized. I salute President Farmajo for his commitment to resuming dialogue and encourage him to follow up on the Garowe meeting as soon as possible. The report of the Secretary-General (see S/2019/393) lists other positive points, such as the Federal Government's commitment to economic reforms and the biometric registration of Somali National Army troops.

Since Belgium is also a federal country I cannot overemphasize the importance of maintaining close and constructive relations between the Federal Government and the federal authorities. That kind of cooperation is crucial to making federalism an effective system that can address the needs of citizens in a framework of good-faith dialogue among the various levels of governance. Unfortunately, electoral issues remain a source of discord and tension. The elections in Jubaland are rapidly approaching, and we must therefore be particularly watchful.

The Somali National Army has decided to launch operations to secure the Lower Shabelle region, which should be accompanied by stabilization measures. I welcome the creation of an interministerial task force to prepare for that, and I would be interested in having more information on the next steps. The scope of international support for Somalia is remarkable, but we must ensure that the support provided is coordinated and transparent, particularly with regard to bilateral cooperation programmes. It is essential for all partners of Somalia to work together to the same purpose.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Raisedon Zenenga, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Somalia, Assistant Secretary-General Ursula Mueller and Mr. Francisco Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), for their briefings.

The situation in Somalia continues to be problematic. We are concerned about the terrorist group Al-Shabaab's increasing activity. It still controls broad areas of the country, and its fighters are infiltrating cities. According to expert reports, the group has managed to set up an independent production facility for explosives. Al-Shabaab represents a threat at the regional level as well, and the terrorist attack in Nairobi in January was a frightening reminder of that. Suppressing the threat of terrorism is a top priority. Effective cooperation in the work of building a national security architecture between the central and federal authorities, with the support of the United Nations and the African Union Mission in Somalia, is especially vital. Here the most important task is ensuring the gradual transfer of responsibility for the country's security to the Somalis themselves. We hope that the process will be carried out in accordance with the existing plans and will also take into account concrete developments on the ground.

AMISOM continues to play a key role in dealing with security challenges. Its reconfiguration should go hand in hand with the formation of Somalia's military and law-enforcement bodies. The plan is to have AMISOM participating actively in the preparation and holding of the general elections planned for 2020 and 2021. In the run-up to the elections, so decisive for the country's future, it would not make sense to sharply reduce the number of African peacekeepers in Somalia.

In spite of all the difficulties, we would like to point to some encouraging trends in Somalia's institution-building, including Mogadishu's efforts to build bridges, figuratively speaking, with the federal States. There is progress in the area of constitutional reform, the positive momentum in the plan for creating a legislative basis for the upcoming election cycle continues, and reform of the financial and economic sectors is proceeding fairly effectively.

The Horn of Africa is experiencing major changes. We believe firmly that the steps being taken by all the

countries involved, including Somalia, to re-establish good-neighbourly relations will ultimately bring the stability and prosperity they desire. However, we should caution that achieving that goal will be possible only by ensuring strict respect for Somalia's sovereignty and non-interference by external players in its internal affairs. We hope that those principles will guide the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Somalia in his work. And in that connection, we welcome the determination of the country's authorities to continue to cooperate productively with the United Nations presence.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): I would first like to thank the briefers for their comprehensive presentations. I am still thinking about Mr. Zenenga's description of the demoralized United Nations staff after the attack on the compound on 1 January, the expulsion of Special Representative Haysom and, also with regard to the United Nations staff, the treatment of the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts. I hope that the morale of the United Nations troops and staff and their cooperation with the Government have improved. For our part, I want to affirm Germany's commitment to Somalia and to all of the United Nations and international efforts there. I would like to make six brief points.

First, I want to echo what several speakers, including my Belgian colleague, said with regard to federalism. Both Belgium and Germany are federal countries, and we know about federalism. We also know that a strong federal Government does not preclude the possibility of strong federal member state Governments. On the contrary, in Germany we have a strong Government in Berlin and a strong Government in Munich for Bavaria, and I am sure that is also possible for Somalia and Puntland or Somaliland. I believe it can work. It is unfortunate that the first meeting in Garowe was not successful, and I would like to know if a second meeting is scheduled, because we believe those conversations must be had and must see results. That is important for my next point.

Secondly, I want to emphasize the importance of a successful constitutional review, the establishment of an electoral legal framework and security reform.

Thirdly, as several speakers, including the representative of the Dominican Republic, have mentioned, I want to highlight the importance of the protection of women and children. The point I specifically want to make in that context is about sexual

violence in conflict. We encourage the Government to strengthen the legal framework to protect victims and prosecute perpetrators, which the Secretary-General recommends in his report (S/2019/393) and which we believe should also be reflected in the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Fourthly, the implementation of the security transition plan is urgent. We need a comprehensive approach with joint and coordinated planning, Somali ownership and the buy-in of all stakeholders. In that context, with regard to the first successful Somali-led operation in Lower Shabelle, I would like to know what lessons were learned in the operation. On the security front we also want to plead for strengthening the police, which is very important for the relationship between the State and its population. A strong police also allows the military to perform the tasks that it is supposed to do.

Fifthly, with regard to the various transition processes, in general, we urge the Government to invite and include women and young people.

Lastly, I was struck by what Assistant Secretary-General Mueller said in her briefing in connection with the humanitarian situation. She and the other briefers emphasized the problem of the severe drought and its consequences. It is not just that the number of people in need of humanitarian aid has increased, it is that the drought affects fragile communities and has the potential to generate conflict. We therefore believe that issues related to the consequences of climate change should be incorporated into the Mission's future mandate.

The President: I would now like to make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Indonesia.

I would first like to join others in expressing our appreciation to Mr. Zenenga, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Madeira, Special Representative of the African Union Commission Chairperson for Somalia, and Assistant Secretary-General Mueller for their comprehensive briefings. I would like to bring three points to the Council's attention.

First, Indonesia stands by its belief that the continued and proactive engagement of the international community is essential to supporting peace and stability in Somalia. We welcome the commitment of the Somali Government and the United Nations to strengthening their cooperation and deepening their partnership. The

relationship between the two should always be based on the fundamental principles of sovereignty, national ownership and mutual respect.

My delegation supports the essential role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) in promoting the Somali Government-led inclusive political settlement, the development of a functioning Federal State and the implementation of the transition plan. Strengthening UNSOM's mandate to support the 2020-2021 elections is a step in the right direction. Those roles are especially pertinent as the political impasse between the Federal Government and the federal member states continues to threaten the possibility of progress in key political and security sectors.

Secondly, we are seriously concerned about the ongoing threat and destabilizing activities of Al-Shabaab, which extend beyond the Somali border. Its attacks in Mogadishu have increased significantly over the past two months, with incidents involving improvised explosive devices taking place almost every day. Its reported ability to manufacture home-made explosives demonstrates that even if they are not actively fighting they continue to come up with other ways to commit atrocities. It is high time that we effectively cut off Al-Shabaab from its sources of weapons and financing.

Against that backdrop, the continued presence of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), as well as its need for predictable and sustainable funding, cannot be overstated. Since the Council is about to deliberate on the AMISOM draft resolution, my delegation wants to emphasize that AMISOM must be reconfigured in a way that does not create a security vacuum and takes the potential humanitarian impact and the safety of the civilian population fully into account. The Somali security forces taking over AMISOM's security responsibilities must be adequately trained and equipped. It will be vital to accelerate the necessary capacity-building.

Thirdly, we must be aware that the efforts to promote peace and stability are taking place against the tide of a deteriorating humanitarian situation and yet another severe drought, as Ms. Mueller mentioned. A third of the population requires humanitarian assistance, some 5.4 million people are expected to experience food insecurity and 1.2 million children are projected to be malnourished in 2019. These are not simply numbers. They are human beings.

With 2.6 million internally displaced persons, Somalia has one of the largest displaced populations in the world. We are concerned about the fact that the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia is critically underfunded.

The international community clearly has no magic wand to resolve the Somali situation, but it could — and obviously should — do more to alleviate the suffering of the Somali people. Understanding the challenging operating environment for humanitarian actors in Somalia, my delegation urges all parties to respect international humanitarian law and remove all impediments to the delivery of humanitarian relief.

I should like to close by commending the Federal Government for assuming ownership and demonstrating perseverance in executing its comprehensive reform agenda, some of which is beginning to bear fruit. We urge continued and sustained political dialogue between the Federal Government and the federal member states to resolve their outstanding differences.

Lastly, my delegation pays tribute to the contributions of UNSOM, AMISOM, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, and all other actors working to bring peace and stability in Somalia.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Somalia.

Mr. Osman (Somalia): At the outset, I would like to offer my prayers and heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims in today's terrorist attacks in Mogadishu in this holy month of Ramadan, which injured or took the lives of innocent civilians, including my mentor, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia and Senior Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Hussein Elabe Fahiye. We are now more determined than ever to fight the menace of faceless borderless international terrorists.

Since this is the first time that I take the floor this month, Mr. President, allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We are confident in your able leadership, Sir, and wish you every success in fulfilling your mandate.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Mr. Raisedon Zenenga,

and the Special Representative of the African Union Commission Chairperson for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Ambassador Francisco Madeira, for their long-standing constructive contributions to peace and security in Somalia. I would also like to acknowledge Ms. Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for her briefing this afternoon.

We take note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/393) and continue to renew our support for and full cooperation with the Secretary-General in this regard.

Even though it has only been just over two years since the election of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo, Somalia has witnessed transformational progress. Thanks to its strong political will, Somalia is on track to fulfil the key benchmarks it has set for itself, which is gradually bearing the fruits of prosperity and stability for all Somalis. We are encouraged by key positive developments such as collecting record tax revenues through automation and enhanced compliance, which is helping us to meet our economic reform goals.

However, there is a cost to any reform, and though we have managed it to the best of our abilities, the Government has since lost some political capital in the ongoing reform process. It is with continued resolve and a robust outlook that the Government has taken on the ambitious reform agenda it set for the security sector. We have worked tirelessly to ensure that all our officers and other military personnel are biometrically registered as part of the electronic payroll reform to eliminate corruption and ensure that they are paid on time, as has been the case for the past 25 months. This reform process will enhance the capability of the Somali National Army operationally and in terms of the implementation of the ambitious national security architecture and transition plan. To answer the question raised by my colleague, the Ambassador of Germany, regarding the lessons learned from the Bariire operation, if the Somali forces are properly funded, equipped and trained, they are capable of fulfilling their duties.

Nevertheless, Al-Shabaab continues to be a threat undermining our efforts to deliver security. As part of the transition process, we have made significant gains against Al-Shabaab in the past eight weeks, having retaken from Al-Shabaab control the strategic towns of Sabiid and Bariire in the Lower Shabelle region.

I would like to express my gratitude to countries that have contributed troops to AMISOM for their commitment and sacrifices. The deployment of their troops has created a space for the political process and for humanitarian-relief corridors. But we cannot effectively implement the transition plan with one hand tied to our back owing to the long-standing arms embargo. Regrettably, the decisions made here at the Security Council and at United Nations Headquarters continue to negatively affect the military capabilities of our security forces in the fight against such terrorist groups as Al-Shabaab, which gives comparative advantage to Al-Shabaab.

In Somalia, we have shown that, while exercising pragmatism and political maturity, contentious and sensitive issues can be debated. In the last month, the Federal Government of Somalia has succeeded in passing a petroleum bill in the Lower House that incorporates a revenue-sharing formula agreed by the Federal Government and the federal member states. In addition, the Prime Minister's Cabinet approved a new draft election law, which is an important step in the political process towards holding elections. The Federal Government is clearly committed to the road map on inclusive politics, which is crucial to sustaining peace and preventing conflict.

The Somali Government remains fully committed to the promotion of human rights and the realization of equality for all its citizens. Despite the great challenges that we face, combined with a drastic reduction in assistance in the area of human rights promotion to less than half of what it has been in the last two years, the Government of Somalia has taken significant steps towards promoting human rights values with specific objectives, including reducing violence against women through Somalia's first dedicated legislation on sexual offences, which was unanimously approved by Cabinet in May 2018. On 2 October 2018, the Federal Government of Somalia signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and since then, the Somali Parliament ratified it. A bill for the establishment of a national disability agency was also passed in December 2018, and the national disability law is being drafted.

Investing in youth is the most effective way to build the Somali nation and counter the ideology of violent extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab. As Secretary-General Guterres once said, "I do not agree that young people are the leaders of tomorrow. More and more, they

are the leaders of today". Our young men and women have been the leaders of our change throughout our history. Therefore, today, more than ever, we need to equip our youth with the skills required in sectors of high growth and high employment potential. We encourage United Nations agencies to train and recruit locally in order to give hope and opportunity to our capable young population in their nation-building process.

I would like to turn the attention of the Council to the recurring humanitarian situation in my country, which, for the past few years, has continued to be of concern. As the Secretary-General's report correctly states, and as the Assistant Secretary-General has reported in her briefing before the Security Council today, limited rainfall in the past three months has compounded existing dry conditions, just as it did last year, with as many 3.4 million people facing crisis levels of food insecurity as a result of water shortages and deteriorating crop yields, according to United Nations specialized agencies.

We strongly believe the humanitarian situation must be addressed as a matter of urgency to avert a humanitarian catastrophe. However, we must also invest in implementing and evaluating long-term solutions that put our people on the path to sustainable development. By taking a comprehensive, prevention-oriented approach, we can together strengthen the nexus between humanitarian and development assistance.

The Federal Government of Somalia is on an upward trajectory and has made significant strides in a number of critical areas. Extraordinary challenges remain as Somalia enters a critical juncture of State-building, federalization and democratization. The Federal Government of Somalia would like to reiterate its commitment to maintaining accelerated progress on processes involved in implementing the road maps. We welcome the United Nations commitment to supporting the Federal Government in its efforts to achieve peace, stability and sustainable development for all Somalis.

The Federal Government of Somalia is confident that the recently established relations of mutual respect and cooperation will be stronger in deepening its long-standing partnership with the United Nations so as to enable it to deliver on its mandate to support the Federal Republic of Somalia in its peacebuilding and State-building efforts.

The Federal Government of Somalia would like to underscore that it has strengthened its national

institutions and national capacities that will bring about lasting peace and development. We urge our partners to work closely and execute Federal Government-led policies, under the Federal Government's mandated bodies and institutions, in order to engender greater ownership and leadership.

Lastly, the Federal Government would like to thank the Secretary-General for his able leadership and the Security Council for its continued support to Somalia.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Mueller to respond to questions and comments.

Ms. Mueller: I thank members of the Council for their interest in the humanitarian situation at this critical time. I also thank them for the support they indicated to fund the upscale humanitarian response to prevent the further deterioration of the drought situation.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Madeira to respond to questions and comments.

Mr. Madeira: The representative of Somalia responded to the question asked by the German representative on the lessons to be learned from the Sabiid and Bariire operations and the future need to empower the forces that must continue to sustain operations like those two.

He spoke of the need to ensure the ability of the Somali National Army (SNA) to generate forces; a properly trained and well-equipped SNA; and an SNA whose members' salaries are paid, guaranteed and predictable. Most importantly, he spoke of an SNA, like the one we saw in Sabiid, that respects human rights, protects the population and their property and does not erect roadblocks and checkpoints, among other such obstacles. Those are the things that we saw, and that we are seeing, in Sabiid. That is an army that we want to see multiplied in terms of numbers. For that to happen, as the Somali representative said, we must continue to fund, support and equip the Somali national security forces. That way, they will have many more successes and there will be a transition that can preserve the gains so far accumulated.

Another important lesson we must draw from Sabiid and Bariire is that the Government is present and holding onto the recovered areas. The presence of the Government is allowing it to win the hearts and minds of the people and keep the population on its side, while preventing Al-Shabaab from reaching and recruiting those populations.

The other question raised was on the prospects for the implementation of the transition plan. We are implementing the transition plan. It will be recalled that when we adopted the transition plan, the issue was that the transitional drawdown should be gradual and responsible, with the capacity to ensure that the gains made were not lost. But what we are seeing now is the time limit of the continued drawdown, without taking into account the aspects of responsibility, graduality and the need to preserve the gains. It is important that there be a correlation with the need to preserve the progress made. I want to insist however that the African Union Mission in Somalia will be guided by the evolution of the situation, and we are ready to comply with any decision that the Security Council sees fit to make.

The other issue is with respect to the integration of regional forces. Council members can see that Bariire was recovered and captured by an integrated Somali force — an integration that has since sought to impede the regional force being transferred into the Somali National Army as a clan army or clan group. It should be integrated into the Somali National Army as part of a multi-ethnic, multi-clan component, with the proper profile of command and control. I have seen and am still seeing that this is a strategy that the Government is undertaking to ensure that the regions contribute with forces. Those forces, however, should not become clan-based groups that try to push for their own clan interests, but rather a force that abides by the Republican principles of an armed force. That is the way go. If that persists, with time integration will become part and parcel of a force that will be able to operate anywhere in Somalia.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Zenenga to respond to questions.

Mr. Zenenga: I thank Council members for their statements of support and for the questions that they have raised. The questions raised by the representative of France have been addressed by previous speakers. I think I will therefore focus on only the questions from the United Kingdom and Germany.

The question raised by the representative of the United Kingdom was about the prospects of the Somalia Partnership Forum. All partners in the Federal Government agree that holding that Partnership Forum is very important, and we are working towards that. There is a preparatory committee that is putting the technical preparations in place. However, as long as

cooperation between the federal member states and the Federal Government leaders is not restored, it might be very difficult to convene that meeting. We are therefore continuing to encourage the resumption of dialogue and the scheduling of another meeting between the respective leaders of the federal member states and the Federal Government. It is important that they have a prior meeting ahead of the Somalia Partnership Forum.

The representative of the United Kingdom also asked about key priorities on which the Forum could focus. The Federal Government has set out its priorities in the four road maps, all of which are important. However, we believe that the Somalia Partnership Forum and, going forward, all of us should focus on those key priorities that will propel progress across the board in Somalia. These are what we have called in our recent discussions the “must-not-fail priorities” that would open up the prospects of further progress on many fronts. I would cite the examples of the restoration of cooperation between the two tiers of Government; the completion of the review of the Constitution; preparations for elections, including the passage of the electoral law; and Somali National Army and police force generation to support the transition process and the ongoing related operations. There is also the issue of achieving the cluster of benchmarks that have been agreed under the economic reform process. We believe that if we make progress in these areas, that would also propel progress across the board.

On the question raised by the representative of Germany on whether staff morale is improved, I will say very briefly that the security environment is still very difficult. The United Nations Support Office in Somalia is doing its best to construct more accommodation facilities, especially office accommodations, so that we can decongest the areas where we have accommodated staff who are working in soft-skin offices, and also to construct areas for social gatherings that we had closed down because they were in open spaces that are vulnerable.

The visit by Ms. DiCarlo contributed immensely to improving staff morale, as she engaged with them. We now have a stock-taking review being conducted by an independent team whose headquarters is deployed here. They are also engaging staff over the course of more than a week, and that is helping also to improve staff morale. We have very active and very capable staff counsellors who are helping in this difficult environment, and we believe that the deployment of the

new Special Representative of the Secretary-General will also contribute immensely to the improvement of staff morale. We continue to update the staff on the progress we are making in repairing our relations with the Federal Government, and that is also helping to reduce tensions within the staff body.

Another question posed by the representative of Germany was whether there had been a follow-up meeting to the Garowe schedule. As I indicated in the

briefing, there has been no agreement on scheduling the next meeting, but the President and the Prime Minister continue to reach out to the federal member states. We are also encouraging them to resume their meetings.

I would add just one point to the lessons learned from Operation Badbaado, which is that joint planning and a comprehensive approach produced very good results.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.