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Seventy-fourth year

8671st meeting

Thursday, 21 November 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Pierce	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	France	Mr. Michon
	Germany	Mr. Schulz
	Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Peru	Mr. Duclos
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Repkin
	South Africa	Mr. Matjila
	United States of America	Mr. Barkin

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2019/884)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2019/884)

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 this meeting: Mr. James Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia; Mr. Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia; Ms. Halima Ismail Ibrahim, Chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission of Somalia; and Mr. Osman Moallim, Executive Director of Somalia Youth Development Network.

Mr. Madeira and Mr. Moallim 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/2019/884, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia.

I also draw colleagues' attention to the fact that we have a lot to get through this morning and that we also have consultations, so it would be a courtesy if delegations and briefers kept to the allotted time.

I now give the floor to Mr. Swan.

Mr. Swan: I congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I am honoured to report to the Council today on the situation in Somalia.

Let me begin by recognizing the important progress achieved in Somalia over the past decade. That progress has included building national and federal member state institutions, scoring significant military gains against Al-Shabaab, enhancing economic growth and improved public sector management. Somalis want to

see that progress consolidated in 2020 and, indeed, made irreversible, and so do their international partners and friends. I am pleased to confirm a number of examples of further progress since my previous report to the Council three months ago (see S/PV.8601).

Somalia remains on the path to debt relief, with favourable assessments by the International Monetary Fund and strong creditor support. A new national development plan was adopted by the Government in September and will guide international partner programmes. Somali National Army troops have held territory they captured from Al-Shabaab earlier this summer in Lower Shabelle. On the diplomatic front, President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo and his Kenyan counterpart, President Uhuru Kenyatta, met last week and announced plans to normalize bilateral relations that had been strained since February. To boost prospects for further advances in 2020, the Somali Government hosted the Somalia Partnership Forum on 1 and 2 October, which identified critical priorities for 2020 and defined specific objectives and timelines in a mutual accountability framework agreed with partners.

Progress on the ambitious agenda for 2020 will require a high degree of political consensus. That will entail dialogue and compromise between the central Government and federal member states, between the executive and legislature, between current office holders and those now out of power and between elite leaders and those community elders, civil society organizations and women's and youth groups who give voice to so many Somalis. After more than a year without effective cooperation between the central Government and key federal member states, the situation has become an obstacle to improving and achieving important national priorities. Somalia's leaders must act urgently to break the stalemate between the centre and the federal member states in the interest of the nation.

Political dynamics in Somalia are increasingly driven by a focus on the 2020 election. I wish to underscore the critical importance of Parliament passing the electoral code and adopting amendments to the law on political parties before the end of December. Any delay in that timeline puts the 2020 electoral calendar at risk. I commend the Government for confirming an initial tranche of financing towards costs related to voter registration. I also commend the Government for naming the national electoral security task force in September, which must now urgently begin its important work.

While that technical progress is encouraging, I must again underscore the need for Somalis to forge a broad political consensus on the electoral system for 2020. In that regard, I very much welcome yesterday's meeting between President Farmajo and his two predecessors and encourage more such consultations. As the election approaches, I call on authorities at all levels of Government to ensure that political space is preserved. Citizens must have the right to speak out, to access media, to organize and meet and to travel to engage fellow Somalis throughout the country. At the same time, I call on all political leaders to act with responsibility, to eschew violence and to protect the integrity of national institutions.

Somalis are also paying close attention to reconciliation and electoral processes at the federal member state level. Reconciliation efforts in Galmudug state now face challenges as competition intensifies over the composition of the parliament. Tensions in Jubaland resulting from the disputed electoral process in August continue to pose risks of violence, clan divisions and even external intervention if not carefully managed. We urge that those situations be addressed through dialogue, compromise and pragmatism.

With respect to relations with Somaliland, we urge authorities in both Mogadishu and Hargeisa to focus on the needs of the population and to remain open-minded about new initiatives to encourage dialogue. With parliamentary elections also expected in Somaliland in 2020, it is important that political freedoms and human rights be respected there, too.

The Federal Government has committed to adopting an amended federal constitution by June 2020. Somali leaders and stakeholders must now redouble their efforts to complete that foundational document. It must address the central issues of the federal model, such as the allocation of powers, the structure of Government and the status of the capital, Mogadishu, and guarantee women's political representation. Peace and stability in Somalia require strong institutions to protect the human rights of citizens and build trust in the State. I call on the central Government and federal member states to reach an agreement on the justice and corrections model and establish the constitutional court, judicial services commission and human rights commission. Among other priority legislation, I urge expedited consideration and passage of the sexual offences bill by Parliament.

Insecurity remains a major challenge to making progress in Somalia. Al-Shabaab continues to execute deadly terrorist attacks against civilians and military targets. With a view to disrupting attacks in Mogadishu, the Somali National Army, with support from the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and international partners, began operations in April to recapture territory from Al-Shabaab in the Lower Shabelle region. Following its previous offensive in August, the Somali National Army has successfully held its ground, despite repeated Al-Shabaab counterattacks. Additional force generation is now required not only to continue those advances but also to support other institutional reforms that are needed in order to implement the security transition plan.

On the economic front, Somalia is on track to reach a decision point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative by early next year. The Federal Government and federal member states have fully cooperated at the Finance Minister level in making progress towards that shared goal. I welcome the Federal Government's adoption of the new National Development Plan. Its content was thoroughly consulted with federal member states and international partners alike. Donors have pledged to align their programmes with the Plan. While the Government and partners remain committed to the longer-term peacebuilding and development agenda for the people, Somalia regrettably continues to be hard hit by humanitarian crises. Thanks to the leadership of the Somali Government's humanitarian team and the generosity of many international partners, lifesaving support has been afforded to those most in need. We express our steadfast solidarity with those Somalis affected by the recurring crises.

In closing, I commend the courage and tenacity of Somali and AMISOM forces in their continued efforts to improve security throughout the country. I underscore the centrality of respect for human rights in all of our collective efforts in Somalia. I reiterate the importance of women, youth and civil society as vital partners in building Somalia's future.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Madeira.

Mr. Madeira: I thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to brief the Council once again on the situation in Somalia. Addressing the Council remains a great privilege. Let me also take this opportunity

to congratulate your country, Madam, the United Kingdom, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month.

The African Union stands in solidarity with the population of Beledweyne and the state of HirShabelle in general, who have had their livelihoods disrupted by the recent floods. The floods have affected a substantial number of people, of whom an estimated 231,000 have been displaced. That tragedy is compounding the effects of insecurity in and around Beledweyne, resulting in a significant number of people being forced to migrate to areas where they can seek shelter and assistance. In an attempt to mitigate the impact of the floods, we have seen a Somali-led response in which the Federal Government of Somalia, the HirShabelle regional Government and individual Somalis, including politicians and civil society members, are responding to the humanitarian crisis in HirShabelle, particularly in Beledweyne.

Working in collaboration with local partners, troops of the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) on the ground have helped to transport people from flooded areas — particularly vulnerable older people, women and young children — to higher ground. AMISOM troops have also been assisting the regional Government in repairing roads and bridges damaged by flood water. While humanitarian partners are scaling up their response, much more is still needed. AMISOM will also soon be providing blankets, mosquito nets and plastic sheeting to over 800 displaced families in and around Beledweyne. That will build on the health care that AMISOM and the military are already providing in their operational sectors.

When I briefed this organ at the beginning of this year (see S/PV.8440), I described what the African Union saw as optimism coming from Somalia. As we draw towards the end of 2019, I wish to state that there are still signs of hope radiating from Somalia and for its people. I would also like to add that those signs of hope are still fragile and require our continuing collective attention. In my briefing today, I will seek to highlight those signs of hope, which if sustained and properly harnessed as we approach 2020, will lead us and Somalia towards lasting peace and security.

While the Federal Government is committed to maintaining and enhancing cooperative relations with federal member states, we see efforts being deployed aimed at finding a solution to relations with Jubaland

and Puntland. In fact, since my briefing in August (see S/PV.8601), we have witnessed commendable steps being taken by the Federal Government aimed at achieving reconciliation and conflict resolution across Somalia. What happened yesterday at Villa Somalia is of extreme significance to the future of détente and inclusive politics in the country. The most senior leaders of the country have chosen to meet and discuss its issues. We should welcome that development and collectively continue to encourage and support those Somali initiatives and harness all opportunities to help diffuse tension and promote understanding.

In Galmudug, we welcomed the efforts that led to the successful reconciliation conference in Dhuusamarreeb in September, at which the presence of AMISOM troops helped to enhance the required conducive environment. We witnessed more than 700 representatives from 11 clans reach consensus on modalities aimed at unifying Galmudug. The Dhuusamarreeb conference represents an example not only of the progress made in achieving inclusive politics but also of the solidarity, positive concurrence and complementarity of efforts between AMISOM and the Somali National Army, on the one hand, and civilians, on the other, in supporting and helping to advance the political process across Somalia. We need to continue to work to ensure that the current misunderstandings in that regional state are overcome and that the process follow and continue its route. While AMISOM troops will maintain their presence in Dhuusamarreeb, with the consent of all parties, including Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a, we look forward to a peaceful outcome of the second phase of the political process and urge all stakeholders to refrain from any action that could delay the establishment of an inclusive Galmudug administration.

We are equally encouraged by the momentum gained through the peaceful resolution of the clan dispute between the Xeraale and Huurshe communities, an initiative led by Prime Minister Khayre in September. Similar efforts have also been extended to South-West state by the Federal Government. We have seen the Federal Government work in partnership with the South-West administration to undertake a series of consultative visits to Baidoa, Bay, Hudur, Bakool and Merca to engage local communities. The impact of that outreach is bringing local communities closer to each other and the Government. A good example of that is the recently held Government-led social reconciliation workshop for South-West traditional elders in October.

On the constitutional review process, the Minister of Constitutional Affairs, the Oversight Committee and the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission continue to meet, consult and carry out outreach work. With most of the technical work nearly completed, AMISOM will continue to call for dialogue and political engagement in line with the 2020 Mutual Accountability Framework commitments, with a view to completing the debate and adopting the federal constitution by June 2020.

Regarding elections preparations, the African Union continues to see real commitment by south Somalia to deliver on that key milestone. But before speaking more about that progress, allow me to first welcome the reaffirmation of the commitment by Mr. Mohamed Farmajo in September at the General Assembly (see A/74/PV.7) to hold universal elections in the last quarter of 2020.

While the passage of the electoral bill and the political pact bill remain critical next steps, we must not lose sight of what has already been achieved. Progress has been made during the past three months on reviewing the electoral bill, with the commendable work of the 15-member ad hoc parliamentary committee completing consultations with all federal member states. We also witnessed the recent positive steps in the appointment of the national electoral security task force and the development of the draft joint concept for security for voter registration under the provisionally approved list of potential voter registration sites. The African Union will continue to work with the Government and the National Independent Electoral Commission on all aspects of electoral preparations.

In that regard, AMISOM has realigned itself to better support preparations for the elections. We now have a dedicated AMISOM election cell, the police component of which, in cooperation with other partners, has helped develop the draft joint concept for security for voter registration, which is now being considered by the electoral task force.

Furthermore, to ensure that the African Union is strengthening its support to the electoral security task force, I am pleased to report that, following a meeting on 19 November with the Somali Police Force Commissioner, General Ali Hassan Mohamed, in his capacity as the electoral task force chair, AMISOM will be providing assistance to develop an election communication strategy for public security.

The communication strategy will be an extension of AMISOM's ongoing election awareness support to the National Independent Electoral Commission, focusing on persuasive communication to assure and deepen confidence in the security preparations prior to, during and after the 2020-2021 elections. That will also include continuous outreach engagement with community policing, with an emphasis on informing the general population of their safety and security at the polls.

Al-Shabaab remains a threat to peace and security in Somalia, with its targeting of innocent civilians, Government facilities and personnel, security forces and international partners, including AMISOM. Despite the group's ability to destabilize, AMISOM has observed a decline in the group's activities since the beginning of October. In our assessment, a combination of three factors substantiate that fact.

First, 2019 continues to see an increase in the number of lethal strikes against Al-Shabaab by partners, particularly concentrated strikes in the Lower Shabelle and Lower Juba areas. The impact of those strikes is now forcing Al-Shabaab to disperse and hide where it cannot be easily identified, isolated and targeted.

Secondly, with the arrival of the Somali rains, Al-Shabaab has found it increasingly difficult to operate along a number of main supply routes. In real terms, those have seen a reduction in improvised explosive device attacks and Al-Shabaab ambushes.

Thirdly, the successive and successful bridge town operations, together with the mobile search and find operations against Al-Shabaab, conducted jointly by Somali security forces and AMISOM, have pushed Al-Shabaab back. The resulting effect has been for Al-Shabaab to contend with ceding more territory in key areas. Despite the overall reduction in Al-Shabaab's activities during the reporting period, Al-Shabaab continues to focus on Mogadishu, in spite of there being enhanced security measures now in place in the city. An illustration of Al-Shabaab's focus was witnessed on 13 October when Al-Shabaab fired nine mortar rounds at the Aden Abdulle International Airport zone, within which the AMISOM and other partners of the United Nations compounds are located. Those mortar attacks resulted in eight people sustaining injuries.

Turning to the status of the implementation of the transition plan, I am pleased to report that AMISOM, in support of the Somali security forces, continues to register tangible progress in implementing the

transition. Despite grappling with challenges on the operational pillar of the transition, during the reporting period AMISOM successfully accomplished some key tasks in support of the Somali security forces. Those include capturing territories from Al-Shabaab and transferring the security responsibility.

In August, AMISOM and the Somali security forces jointly recovered Awdheegle, the third bridge town in Lower Shabelle. Awdheegle is still being jointly held by AMISOM and the Somali National Army. That is building on our previous recovery operations of three bridge towns in the Lower Shabelle.

As part of extending military operations under the transition, also in August, AMISOM conducted targeted operations to disrupt Al-Shabaab's activities in Cowsquori and Dare Salam, both in AMISOM sector 2. Meanwhile, in Warsheikh in September, and in line with the transitional requirements, AMISOM transferred security responsibilities over that town to the Somali Police Force. The Force is still holding that town at present, and that is something of which we must take note.

As AMISOM proceeds with the implementation of its obligations under the transition plan, the next steps would be to complete the recovery of the remaining bridge towns in Lower Shabelle and proceed to implement other earmarked benchmarks for the second phase of the plan. To that effect, the current details are a factor that needs to be taken into account. The other factor is the need to fill the current gaps with regard to force generation. That is a central factor in our joint effort to accomplish our mandated tasks in the area of defence and security. Military pressure against Al-Shabaab needs to be continuous and unremitting to dependably yield the expected results. The enhancement of our capacity to collect and process good, timely and actionable intelligence and the mobility of the forces to conduct effective targeted operations, with the required elements of speed and surprise, combined with the capacity to sustainably hold the recovered territory, remain essential for us to achieve our transitional objectives in the way they have been planned and approved by the Council and by the African Union Peace and Security Council.

For that, more well-trained and well-equipped Somali battalions of the Somali National Army, supported and complemented by other components of the Somali security forces, are required in the theatre

of operations. We are cognizant of the contribution of partners in that regard but the facts on the ground clearly show that more support and a more sizeable response are needed.

The African Union looks forward to the upcoming force generation conference in Mogadishu in December in terms of support for the transition requirements. We equally welcome the decision of the European Union to redirect part of its staff and support to funding the federal Darwish training as part of the force generation effort. In parallel with our operational activities on the military front, the AMISOM police continue to support the enhancement of the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Internal Security and HirShabelle regional state, to mention but a few.

The President: I am very sorry to interrupt but I wonder if I could ask Mr. Madeira to kindly bring his remarks to a close, as there are two other briefers, followed by the statements of the Council members. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General has requested that the Council then hold consultations.

I give the floor to Mr. Madeira to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Madeira: At the beginning of my statement I mentioned that there are signs of hope in Somalia as we look forward to 2020. Allow me to end on the same optimistic note. The recent rapprochement between Somalia and Kenya is a testament to the potential that exists in the Horn of Africa. The measures agreed between both countries will no doubt have a positive impact on both the neighbouring sisterly countries.

We are going to implement the threat assessment decision that was taken by this body. Concrete steps have been taken and things are going well.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Ibrahim.

Ms. Ibrahim: I am pleased to address the Security Council regarding Somalia's democratization process. From the outset, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the members of the Council and the international community for their support for Somalia and, in particular, for assisting the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) in its effort to carry out its mandate of conducting universal suffrage elections.

Since Somalia formally became an independent State in 1960, universal suffrage elections have been

conducted only twice, in 1964 and, most recently, in 1969. The essential platforms for promoting democracy, including political parties and the Constitution, were suspended when the military took over in 1969.

After 21 years in power, the military Government was removed from power by clan militias in 1991. The country descended into civil war, as those clan-based factions failed to agree on power-sharing and universal suffrage has not been in effect over the past 50 years.

Currently, Somalia has an estimated population of 12 million, with a large population living in major cities across all member states as internally displaced persons. Following several decades of State failure and in the absence of a functioning Government, a clan-based power-sharing model was agreed upon at the end of 2016 and in early 2017. Under the clan power-sharing model, clan leaders were given the mandate to nominate candidates and delegates from their respective clans. In the end, the elders managed to choose 275 members of the Lower House and 54 members of the Upper House.

Although the model facilitated the indirect election of Members of Parliament and the President at the federal level, the process was compromised by extensive vote buying. There was a great deal of corruption in the process, the limited participation of women in the two Houses and the complete exclusion of marginalized and minority groups.

The National Independent Electoral Commission was first established in 2015. Soon after its formation, the NIEC Board of Commissioners began building an institutional foundation to prepare the country for elections in 2020/2021. The NIEC's preparatory work commenced with the formulation of a strategic plan that was based on the constitutional principles and harmonized with the country's national development plan and Constitution. The four-year preparation by the NIEC has focused on the following areas.

First is the capacity-building of the NIEC Commissioners and the secretariat. The second aspect is the provisional registration of political parties. To date, 57 political parties have temporary registration. The third aspect is the establishment of NIEC field offices in all federal member states. The fourth area is the development of the voter education curriculum, supporting materials and voter education messages. Fifth is the identification and verification of potential voter registration sites and the selection of the voter registration model. The sixth area is the

development of the concept of operations and budget for voter registration operations. Seventh is overseeing the construction on the NIEC data processing centre and warehouse building. The eighth element is the preparation of all the necessary rules and regulations for the adoption of the electoral law.

The significant progress in the preparation for the 2020/2021 election would not have been possible without the support of the Federal Government of Somalia, federal member states and our international partners, particularly the Integrated Election Support Group, the United Nations arm created to provide assistance to Somalia's elections in 2020/2021 and the African Union. There are also several international non-governmental organizations.

Since 2011, Somalia's political leaders have agreed to holding a one-person one-vote election as the basis for the process of choosing leaders and a substitute for the clan-based power-sharing. Besides the leaders' decision, the findings from a nation-wide feasibility study conducted by the NIEC indicate significant public support for a fair and credible election given that it is the cornerstone for building a vibrant society in Somalia. Moreover, the Somali public support the one-person one-vote system because they believe that it is the only mechanism whereby marginalized groups can regain their rights to take part in the political decision-making process.

I want to remind the members of the Council that 2020 is a pivotal year for Somalia's citizens, who have been denied their right to political participation for 50 years. The 2020 election is a milestone for the international community, which has been investing heavily in Somalia for several decades with a view to introducing and promoting democracy and good governance. However, that milestone will be realized only when the Somali leaders and the international community show a commitment to ensuring that one-person-one-vote elections take place in 2020 and 2021.

I want to reiterate that the clan power-sharing model was initially designed as a temporary measure to support the transitional Government of Somalia in preparing the country for one-person-one-vote elections. That is why various meetings of Somali political leaders and partnership forums have all called for one-person-one-vote elections and an end to the clan-based power model. It is also worth noting that

any election model that does not enable the Somali people to exercise their right to vote violates Somalia's Constitution and the various human rights conventions that Somalia has ratified. Article 46 of the Constitution specifically stipulates that the public representation system shall be open and shall give everyone the opportunity to participate, and that its procedures and rules shall be simple and understandable.

In order to restore the right of the Somali people to a free election, as stipulated in article 22 of the Constitution, and also in recognition of the fact that one-person-one-vote elections are the cornerstone for building Somalia's democratic governance, I therefore want to make the following appeal to Somalia's leaders and international partners. The National Independent Electoral Commission is requesting that the country's leaders treat the 2020-2021 one-person-one-vote elections as a constitutional obligation and a national priority, and that they provide the political and financial support that the Electoral Commission needs to carry out its mission to conduct one-person-one-vote elections. The Electoral Commission also appeals to our international partners to make the necessary funding for election operations available. The overall operational cost of the election in Somalia is estimated at \$53 million, excluding the cost of election security and the Electoral Commission's annual operational costs. The Electoral Commission also expects political support from the international community.

I want to remind our partners that there are several post-conflict countries whose elections have been guided by the United Nations and the international community with costs several times higher than the total projected costs of Somalia's election. But that was done because the international community believed that elections were a vital part of the process of rebuilding those countries. While the National Independent Electoral Commission appreciates the support that the Somali Government and the international community have given in the past to promote Somalia's democratization, we believe their efforts of the past years will be wasted if they do not genuinely support the holding of one-person-one-vote elections in Somalia in 2020 and 2021.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Moallim.

Mr. Moallim: I am very honoured and humbled to be among the invited briefers and to have been given this opportunity to address the Security Council as a

representative of civil society in Somalia. My name is Osman Moallim. I am the Chairperson of Somali Non-State Actors and the Executive Director of Somalia Youth Development Network. I want to begin by thanking the Council for giving me the opportunity to address its members as the Chair of Somali Non-State Actors. I also want to stress the importance of this opportunity to represent Somalia's civil society. It means a lot for civil society, not only because it encourages inclusivity, but also because it empowers the vital role of Somalian civil society in achieving a stable and progressive governance system in Somalia. I would like to take this opportunity not only to indicate our concerns but to strongly express our gratitude to the international community and the Security Council for their commitment to supporting the Somali people in their time of need.

Somalia is certainly a work in progress and is coming of age in terms of recovering from conflict, transforming society and improving security and the functionality of its regional and federal State institutions, as Special Representative Swan made clear in August in his remarks to the Security Council on the situation in Somalia (see S/PV.8601). However, Somalia's progress is reaching a precarious crossroads, where if it takes the wrong road by postponing or cancelling the upcoming election, it will undoubtedly compromise years of international and Somali peacebuilding and State-building efforts. On the other hand, by taking the right road it can indeed further solidify and enhance the gains made so far. The right road for Somalia now is to organize the anticipated 2020-2021 elections in a free, fair and inclusive manner. Credible elections will provide a foundation for the country to address all of its other pressing issues, such as the economy, ensuring a peaceful society and security, so as to enable it to make improvements on the political, economic and social fronts.

Frankly, there are many challenges to transforming the vision of universal elections in 2020 and 2021 into reality. The time for organizing them is limited, as they are to be held a year from now. There are concerns about a lack of clarity among key stakeholders on the progress that has been made towards making the elections a reality. There is also a strong feeling among stakeholders that the Federal Government and the federal member states are remaining silent on such important national issues as the electoral process, the completion of the critical electoral law and amendments

to the Constitution regarding the election process and policies envisaged, such as the electoral dispute resolution mechanism, which have yet to be finalized.

As a civil-society organization, we have reviewed the situation and provided our recommendations to the Government and the National Independent Electoral Commission. We have made it clear that notwithstanding the insecurity and the fragility of the institutions in most of the country, civil society generally welcomes the one-person-one-vote process, coupled with the required safeguards to protect and promote the political rights of minorities and underrepresented groups such as women and young people. Implementing a system of proportional representation at this time, even if it is limited by our many challenges, would open up the political space and overcome many vested and corrupt interests in the status quo. That would be a massive improvement over the previous process for selecting members of Parliament. It would increase the quality of citizens' participation in that institution and reduce the group-think mentality that is currently plaguing our country.

We are also aware that the current relationship between the Federal Government and the federal member states is tense. That affects our security, political institutions and State-building efforts. Without cooperation between the Federal and regional Governments, very little progress can be made towards organizing a credible election. Security still remains a major obstacle to the one-person-one-vote election process. Although some major cities could be relatively safe for the polls, people outside these areas will probably face difficulties in voting or even travelling to the urban hubs. Other obstacles include designing the right process and putting the necessary technical, logistical and financial requirements in place before elections can be held.

It is imperative to ensure that as we transition to the 2020-2021 elections they can take place in the interests of the people and of stability and democracy in Somalia. Fair and free elections will increase confidence in good governance and effect change through peaceful means. We therefore need a new momentum to advance the process is if Government institutions are to become more inclusive and accountable and establish the rule of law in the country.

I would therefore strongly recommend that the international community encourage and support the

Government and the people of Somalia in the following ways. They should improve security. The Federal Government and the federal member states should be brought together to enable them to reach a political accommodation on a number of important issues, such as the electoral model and other constitutional issues. Representation and participation in the upcoming electoral process should be strengthened and expanded. The role of women in preventing and resolving conflict, as well as in the electoral and political process, should be strengthened. The general public's knowledge of the electoral process should be enhanced and bureaucratic delays should be resolved. Logistic and technical advice should be provided when and where applicable, and tensions between the Federal Government and federal member states should be mitigated in the interests of peace and stability for the people of Somalia.

Ultimately, we strongly recommend that the upcoming one-person-one-vote election proceed by consensus with no significant delays. With the continued support of Somalia's international partners, I believe that the Somali Government and people will be able to continue on their journey towards a peaceful and prosperous future. Somali civil society is able and ready to support the process once a political consensus is achieved. Once again, I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Council. I ask Council members to accept the warm greetings of the Somali people for their constant support in helping us re-energize Somalia so that it can start taking steps forward again, since it seems that the momentum has stalled.

I would like to end on this parting note. Women in Somalia are known as the backbone of Somali households and should also be recognized as the backbone of the Somali nation. Without that backbone, we would be paralysed. Their involvement in all processes is imperative if we want to succeed as a nation, but we must also protect our backbone.

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

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

Mr. Michon (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to start by thanking our briefers for their statements. I also want to express our sadness on hearing of the death yesterday in Mogadishu of the human rights defender Ms. Almaas Elman. We offer our condolences to her family, especially Ms. Ilwad Elman, who was with us the day before yesterday (see S/PV.8668), as well as to

the Governments and peoples of Somalia and Canada. We hope that the full circumstances surrounding her death will be brought to light. I would like to highlight four points today.

First, with regard to the political situation in Somalia, France remains extremely concerned about the deadlock in relations between the Federal Government of Somalia and some federal member states, which represents a major obstacle to the completion of critical projects for Somalia. As the Special Representative said, it is therefore urgent to see that dialogue is resumed, particularly between the Federal authorities and the authorities of Jubaland, Puntland and Galmudug. That dialogue should in no way be conditioned by time pressures surrounding local elections to the detriment of national interests.

Secondly, regarding the 2020-2021 elections, France welcomes the commitment made by the Somali Federal Government at the Somalia Partnership Forum to adopting a new electoral code by the end of this year, which is a fundamental step in the process for elections to be held at the end of 2020 or the beginning of 2021 in line with the principle of one person, one vote, as Ms. Ibrahim recalled, and with the full and effective participation of Somali women.

Turning to the security situation, France remains concerned about the frequency of attacks by Al-Shabaab, particularly in Mogadishu. In that context, we want to emphasize the importance of continuing to implement the plan for transitioning security from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to the Somali security forces. The operations conducted in Lower Shabelle were a step in the right direction, but efforts must now continue in coordination with regional forces, AMISOM and international partners. Of course, it is also extremely important that the Somali Federal authorities continue their force-generation efforts.

With regard to AMISOM, France is paying close attention to the issue of respect for the deadlines fixed by the Council, in particular the reduction of the troop ceiling by 1,000 military personnel by 28 February 2020. We believe that AMISOM's reconfiguration must be a gradual process and conducted in the most stable areas of the country. It is therefore essential that the Council's decisions are fully complied with. In addition, I would like to reiterate that the European Union's support for AMISOM is part of a cooperation framework based on mutual commitment. Our

significant efforts hinge on tangible results on the part of Somali's Federal authorities, both in terms of the security transition, which I have already mentioned, and on the resumption of dialogue with federal member states. This was the approach taken in the run-up to the signing of the Mutual Accountability Framework at the Somalia Partnership Forum, which we commend.

Finally, France remains concerned about the serious humanitarian situation and the ongoing violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. I particularly have in mind the acts of violence against the civilian population, including sexual and gender-based violence and violence against children, crimes that we know are perpetrated by terrorist groups but also, regrettably, sometimes by the Somali security forces. It is therefore essential to ensure that such violations cease and that those responsible are prosecuted. The reintegration of survivors of such violence is also essential to ensure a return to lasting peace.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate the importance France attaches to smooth cooperation between the Somali Federal authorities and United Nations entities generally, especially the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992), concerning Somalia, which we hope will be able to conduct a visit to the country as soon as possible.

Mr. Barkin (United States of America): At the outset, we would like to thank our briefers for joining us today. We would like to join others in expressing our condolences for the tragic death of Ms. Almaas Elman and urge justice and security for all of Somalia's civil society.

Since the Council's most recent meeting on Somalia in August (see S/PV.8601), we have seen varying degrees of progress towards long-term security and stability in Somalia. The United States applauds the recent successes of the Somali national security forces against Al-Shabaab with the support of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), particularly in Lower Shabelle. We are encouraged by United Nations reports of fewer incidents of armed conflict during the past three months compared to the same period last year, as well as by the fact that Somali security forces are successfully reclaiming and holding territory from Al-Shabaab in the face of repeated counterattacks.

We further support the ongoing efforts of AMISOM's leadership and look to the Somali security

forces and institutions to undertake the reforms and development efforts that will enable them to take on greater responsibilities from AMISOM in accordance with the transition plan. In that regard, the United States is pleased to help build capacity within Somalia's security forces, and we appreciate Somalia's partners on the Council, who are also contributing to capacity-building for the country's security. It is crucial that we ensure collaboration and coherence in this overall effort. We are also encouraged by the fact that tensions between Somalia and Kenya appear to be easing and we remain prepared to facilitate future dialogue and reconciliation efforts.

Additionally, we congratulate Somalia on its progress on fiscal reforms, as it seeks eventual debt relief next year through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and we encourage the Somali authorities to continue their efforts.

With that in mind, the United States underscores the important role that sanctions have played in limiting Al-Shabaab's operational capabilities, and we look forward to working with our partners to use the Somali sanctions regime to choke off funding and other sources of support to Al-Shabaab and to further degrade its ability to carry out attacks against Somalia, and its neighbours and partners.

We are, however, concerned about ongoing political divisions and the lack of positive engagement between the Federal Government in Mogadishu and the federal member states. We acknowledge the recent confidence-building efforts of the Federal Government and state Governments of Galmudug and South-West state with regard to political, security and development challenges in their communities, but more needs to be done.

We are troubled by the recent events in Jubaland and the state presidential elections in August. We urge the Federal Government and Jubaland's Ahmed Mohamed Islam "Madobe" to engage in direct dialogue to address outstanding issues, and we encourage neighbouring federal states and international partners to support efforts to reach a resolution.

Finally, looking to the 2021 elections, the United States urges the Federal Government and the state Governments to be transparent in their preparations and respect the rights of independent journalists to freely inform the public about electoral issues and developments. We also stress the importance of

completing the outstanding elections-related laws that will serve as the foundation for the elections and deepen the trust between the Federal and state Governments. We caution that limiting electoral processes or delaying legislation will only damage the country's goals of peace, stability and economic growth.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): On behalf of the three elected African members of the Security Council — Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and South Africa — I would like to start by thanking Mr. James Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (AMISOM); Mr. Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia; Ms. Halima Ismail Ibrahim, Chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission of Somalia; and Mr. Osman Moallim, Executive Director of Somalia Youth Development Network, for their briefings. The African members of the Security Council also welcome our colleague the Permanent Representative of Somalia to this meeting concerning his homeland.

We also join other colleagues in offering our condolences to the family of Ms. Almaas Elman, who was killed in Somalia yesterday.

The African members of the Council are pleased to note that Somalia is making progress on the road to political, security, economic and social recovery, despite enormous challenges. That progress is a result of Somalia's continued focus on national priorities that are guided by the Somali transition plan and the National Development Plan framework. The African Union, through AMISOM, continues to support the efforts of the Federal Government to ensure inclusive and enhanced relations with the federal member states.

However, Somalia needs the support of all its partners to harness and sustain ongoing efforts towards effective stabilization and assistance in preparing for post-conflict reconstruction and development across the country. In that regard, critical questions remain with regard to prospects for credible and timely one-person-one-vote elections in 2020 and 2021.

As the focus shifts to elections, there is the potential for increased political tensions. The federal member states' agreement on the electoral law, security planning and funding will be crucial. The international community should push for accelerated electoral

preparations, including the legal framework, as well as security and logistics.

The African members of the Security Council call on the Council to support the work of the National Independent Electoral Commission on the finalization of the preparations for the upcoming elections, such as public outreach and pre-voter registration preparations, including the identification of voter registration locations that can be secured and supported by AMISOM. The completion of the constitutional review process is a critical milestone for Somalia as it forges ahead in laying the foundations for lasting and sustainable peace and security in the country.

In that regard, improved collaboration and cooperation between the Federal Government and its federal member states are crucial to advancing security, including the integration and generation of forces to fight side by side with AMISOM, the implementation of the transition plan, deepening federalism and completing the constitutional review process.

The three African members of the Security Council also want to emphasize the important role of women. Through continued engagement and advocacy, notably of women in AMISOM and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), together with Government officials, Somali women's participation in the political process, including in the electoral process, is increasing. Prior to the 2016-2017 elections, the aim was to secure and achieve 30 per cent representation in Parliament. Women secured 24 per cent of the seats in the current Parliament.

It is also important to create the conditions for the political mobilization of youth and enable them to participate fully and responsibly in the future elections in Somalia. In that regard, it is important to commend the work of UNSOM to help better identify the obstacles to youth participation and to call on the Somali authorities, national civil society and the international community to strengthen their actions in that regard.

The African members of the Security Council commend the progress made in the security sector in Somalia with the support of AMISOM. The process that led to the capture from Al-Shabaab and continued holding of the bridge towns of Sabiid, Bariire and Awdheegle in Lower Shabelle is the most telling example in that regard. However, Al-Shabaab retains its operational capabilities, as evidenced by consistent counter-attacks and systematic attacks against security

forces, civilians, AMISOM, the United Nations and international actors.

In that regard, the three African Security Council members strongly condemn the mortar attack on the United Nations and AMISOM compounds on 13 October. We extend our wishes for a speedy and full recovery to the injured personnel and call for the enhancement of international efforts to counter the threat of terrorism and violent extremism in Somalia.

In addition, the pace of generating Somali security capacities and force transition from AMISOM have been slow and well short of expected timelines. It is therefore crucial to find ways of supporting the force generation of Somali security forces to ensure that they undertake joint operations with AMISOM, hold newly liberated territories, protect civilian centres and secure the main supply routes.

The three African Security Council members encourage the AU, AMISOM, the United Nations and the Federal Government of Somalia to undertake a joint threat assessment of the situation in Somalia, pursuant to resolution 2472 (2019) and the communiqué of the AU Peace and Security Council, in order to prepare for the upcoming AMISOM troop reduction of 1,000 by 28 February 2020. It will be recalled that in the fulfilment of its mandate, as stipulated in the relevant Security Council resolutions and AU Peace and Security Council communiqués, AMISOM has already reconfigured and drawn down its force strength by 2,000 troops. By February 2020, another 1,000 effectives are expected to be withdrawn from the Mission's theatre of operations.

The African Security Council members urge the Council to ensure that any AMISOM drawdown or reconfiguration, as well as the transition, is conditioned and guided by the actual situation on the ground. That should also be based on the capacity and capability of the Somali security forces to guarantee security and stability for the country's people.

The deterioration of the humanitarian situation, in particular owing to drought, food insecurity and the increase in the number of internally displaced persons, is a cause of serious concern for the African members of the Security Council. The situation, in fact, increases the need to help and protect those populations in distress. It is therefore urgent that the international partners continue to redouble their efforts to provide the funds that are lacking in the financing of

the 2019 humanitarian response plan and support the humanitarian response in 2020 in order to address the food-security crisis faced by more than 2 million people.

In conclusion, the three African member States on the Security Council reaffirm their support and appreciation for AMISOM, UNSOM, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia and all other international partners for their important contributions to the restoration of peace and stability in Somalia. We also pay tribute to and salute the gallant peacekeepers who paid the ultimate sacrifice in assisting Somalia in its struggle to ensure the peace and safety of its people.

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

The Dominican Republic welcomes the forum held on 1 and 2 October in Mogadishu, in which specific and priority commitments were defined, such as the holding of elections at the end of 2020 or the beginning of 2021, the adoption of the draft electoral law by December 2019 and the completion of the constitutional review by June 2020.

The political stalemate continues to be an obstacle to achieving significant progress, making it necessary for Somali leaders to redouble their efforts aimed at finding solutions to problems through consensus, prioritizing the interests of the Somali people. We stress the need for further progress on the legal framework for the 2020 and 2021 elections and urge the Federal Government and the federated member states to spare no effort in reaching an agreement on a comprehensive political framework for the key electoral issues. We welcome the Federal Government's efforts in the constitutional review process and its commitment to finalizing the Constitution by June 2020. We urge the parties to continue pursuing constructive, inclusive and transparent dialogues based on consensus.

We strongly condemn the assassination of Almaas Elman and would like to express our condolences to her family and to the people of Somalia. We have lost a brilliant young peacebuilder and a great humanitarian. Just two days ago, her sister, Ilwad, was in this Chamber urgently calling on us to protect the humanitarian workers and human rights defenders who continue to be killed, disappeared and abducted (see S/PV.8668). We will therefore continue to support the struggle of the Elman sisters. Those responsible for this inhumane act must be identified and brought to justice.

The inclusion of women and young people has great potential to transform societies, which is why we must increase their political participation and power-sharing. Women must be involved at all levels in order for them to reach a minimum of 30 per cent of seats in the 2020 elections.

We condemn the attacks perpetrated by the terrorist group Al-Shabaab, which continues to be the main source of violence, targeting Government facilities and personnel, security forces, and public places through the use of improvised explosive devices.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia is of particular concern because of the high level of widespread severe acute malnutrition at a time when humanitarian operations continue to be hampered by restricted access to vulnerable areas. It is therefore essential that all local actors contribute to facilitating humanitarian access and that the international community redouble cooperation efforts as part of the humanitarian response plan for Somalia in order to save lives and alleviate the needs of the most vulnerable.

In conclusion, we would like to acknowledge the important role of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia in achieving lasting peace and stability in the country. We are confident that the process of preparing for and holding future elections will be a gateway to a new stage of dialogue that will promote the development of an increasingly participatory democracy by contributing to the search for lasting solutions to the many challenges that the Somali people are facing.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to thank Mr. James Swan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Mr. Francisco Caetano Jose Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia. We also wish to thank Ms. Ibrahim, Chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission of Somalia, and Mr. Moallim, Executive Director of Somalia Youth Development Network.

In the light of the current developments in Somalia, I wish to focus on several points. First, with regard to political progress and development, the Federal Government of Somalia has achieved a great deal despite the numerous challenges the country is facing.

We therefore applaud its success as it progresses on the path towards national reconciliation, notwithstanding the obstacles, thanks to Government-led efforts aimed at building and strengthening institutions of the State, particularly through its support for the Somali national development plan. At Annual Meetings of their Boards of Governors in October, both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund pointed to the fact that the plan was on track.

We also welcome the steady improvements witnessed in the political and security situation, particularly in terms of the establishment of conditions conducive to the holding of elections in 2020 and 2021, the adoption of the draft electoral law by December, and the conclusion of the constitutional review process by June 2020, as was reaffirmed at the Somali Partnership Forum held at the beginning of October, which resulted in an agreement on the Mutual Accountability Framework. We wish to highlight the role the League of Arab States has played in technical meetings with the Federal Government of Somalia in setting up a support mechanism for the Somali national development plan and in ensuring the implementation of its initiative on the forgiveness of foreign debt.

On the security situation, we appreciate the important role being played by the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), working in tandem with the Somali national security forces, to bolster stability and improve the security situation. However, we remain concerned by the growing offensive capability of armed groups, in particular Al-Shabaab. Indeed, the report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/884) mentions significant developments in Al-Shabaab's ability to manufacture improvised explosive devices. In this regard, we condemn all the attacks carried out by Al-Shabaab, whether they be against the United Nations and AMISOM or international partners. We call upon the international community to fully support the Federal Government of Somalia in its efforts to rebuild and rehabilitate security and military institutions and step up efforts to improve Somali security capabilities, especially in the light of the transition plan and the gradual drawdown of AMISOM.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, like others, we are concerned about the dire humanitarian challenge and its effects on the population, in particular the increasing number of internally displaced persons as a result of the floods, drought and armed conflict

that continue to exert tremendous pressure on Somali citizens, the Government and international partners. We call upon donors to redouble their efforts so as to prevent the emergence of a food insecurity crisis affecting more than 2 million Somalis and to address the acute malnutrition and food insecurity in the country. Accordingly, we welcome the efforts of the United Nations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Health Organization and other humanitarian organizations present on the ground, all of which deliver assistance to those in need.

In conclusion, we call on the international community to support the Federal Government of Somalia in every way possible and to safeguard its security, sovereignty and territorial integrity, with a view to consolidating and strengthening the country's national unity.

Mr. Duclos (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Special Representative James Swan and the various briefers invited to today's meeting for their valuable contributions. We join others in expressing our condolences at the passing of Almaas Elman, a prominent human rights defender in Somalia, which we hope will be duly investigated so as to shed light on the circumstances of this tragic death.

Peru welcomes the recent developments in Somalia in the run-up to the forthcoming elections, including the renewed commitments made by the Federal Government of Somalia at the Somalia Partnership Forum in October, which clearly set out the next steps in that direction. We underscore in particular the commitments made to hold elections in the year 2020 or 2021, to adopt the electoral law in December and to complete the constitutional review by the middle of next year. Implementing this agenda and other political reforms, and their development under the principles of inclusion and transparency, are critical factors in ensuring that the electoral process is a success and in building a Federated State with broad-based support.

However, we regret the absence of the leaders of Jubaland and Puntland from the Somalia Partnership Forum just mentioned. We are also concerned by the incidents that occurred during the regional elections in Galmudug. We call on the Federal Government of Somalia and its federated member states to resolve the outstanding issues through dialogue and cooperation with a view to contributing to the necessary process of reconciliation.

We underscore the importance of promoting the active participation of women and young people in the country's political life. Incorporating their contributions into decision-making and reconciliation processes is the only way to establish an inclusive democratic State. We hope that the reforms approved by the Government lead to the fulfilment of the 30 per cent quota for the participation of women established in 2016.

At the same time, we regret that, despite the increasing offensive capacity of the Somali forces, Al-Shabaab continues its senseless destruction, especially against civilian targets. We are worried by the large-scale attacks using improvised explosive devices and we underscore the importance need for international partners to continue providing support to the Somali Government in order to tackle this terrorist threat.

Similarly, we note with concern the grave humanitarian situation affecting millions of Somalis. The growing number of internally displaced persons as a result of the droughts and armed conflict represents an immense challenge. We call on the international community to address this situation, which has been exacerbated by the adverse climatic conditions of recent months.

In conclusion, I commend the work carried out by the African Union Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia in supporting the efforts of the authorities and the people of Somalia. We also stress the important need for the African Union, the United Nations and other international partners to continue providing sustained support to joint efforts aimed at bringing about the conditions needed to build a safe and stable Federal Somali State.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank all the briefers for their contributions. I should also like to join other speakers in expressing our condolences to the family of Ms. Almaas Elman, who worked tirelessly for peace in Somalia. In her honour, we must redouble our efforts to make her dream a reality.

I should like to make a few remarks on the political situation, security issues and the humanitarian situation in Somalia. First of all, Belgium welcomes the progress made by Somalia and the political will of its President. We are all aware of the challenges. To overcome them, political decisions require consultation between the

Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states. It is therefore imperative that relations between these levels of power be relaunched.

The time has also come for progress in preparing for the universal suffrage elections in 2020 and 2021. It is good news that Parliament has resumed its work. We call on the federal authorities to redouble their efforts to respect the established timetable by reaching an agreement with the federal member states that incorporates key electoral issues and by promptly adopting the electoral law with the necessary amendments. The law on political parties also requires amendment. The National Electoral Security Task Force must get to work quickly.

Secondly, in the security sector, the transition plan must remain the common thread of the Government's actions. The operations of the Somali National Army are an encouraging sign of the way national capacities are developing. These capacities must now help establish the conditions for the handover of responsibilities from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In this regard, I would recall the support provided to Somalia by the European Union, including through its financing of AMISOM and the missions of the European Union Training Mission for Somalia, the European Union capacity-building mission and the counter-maritime-piracy force, Operation Atalanta.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/884) confirms once again that Al-Shabaab is the leading threat to security and stability in Somalia. Terrorist attacks have continued bring mourning to Somalia, and we strongly condemn them. Indeed, the Security Council has just renewed the sanctions regime that aims precisely to degrade Al-Shabaab's capacities.

Finally, in the humanitarian areas, the fate of the Somali population remains at the heart of our concerns. The figures we have heard illustrate the extent to which Somalia is vulnerable to climate shocks, manifesting as ever-more frequent droughts. Against this challenging backdrop, which is exacerbated by the insecurity and violence generated by Al-Shabaab and Da'esh as well as by other tensions and conflicts between communities or between federal member states, it is the most vulnerable — women and children — whom we have a particular duty to protect.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Swan, Special Representative of the

Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Madeira, Chair of the Somali National Independent Electoral Commission, Ms. Ibrahim, and Executive Director of the Somalia Youth Development Network, Mr. Moallim, for their briefings.

Somalia is a strategically important country in the Horn of Africa. Maintaining its peace and stability has a direct bearing on peace and development in the continent.

According to the two most recent reports of the Secretary-General (S/2019/884 and S/2019/661), the situation in Somalia is largely stable. The Somali Federal Government has advanced in earnest the process of State reconstruction and made significant progress in the political, economic and security fields. Its campaign against piracy and armed robbery off the coast has borne fruit. Preparations are under way for the election schedules for late 2020 or early 2021.

At the same time, Somalia continues to face multiple challenges in terms of peace and security. The international community should continue to pay close attention to the situation in the country and focus its constructive assistance on the following areas. First, to help Somalia improve its governance capacity, the Security Council and the international community should adhere to the principle of Somali leadership and ownership and, on that basis, respect the Somali Government's leadership, help the country advance in its political process, enhance federal institutions and improve relations between the Federal Government and the governments of the federal member states, so as to create favourable conditions for next year's elections to be peaceful and smooth and to further consolidate the momentum of the Somali peace process.

Secondly, to strengthen Somalia's security situation, there must be capacity-building and renewed support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in implementing its mandate to improve security in the country. The hard part is tackling the terrorist threat. Since its establishment, AMISOM has been an active force in combating such terrorist organizations as Al-Shabaab and has played an important role in maintaining peace and stability in Somalia. The international community should continue to support the Mission in delivering on its mandate, provide it with stable, predictable and sustainable financial support, assist Somalia in security capacity-building so that the Somali security forces can gradually take over

security tasks and effectively assume responsibility for maintaining national security.

Thirdly, efforts should be made to deepen cooperation among the United Nations, the African Union and countries of the region on issues relating to Somalia.

The international community should support the efforts of African countries to apply African solutions to African problems and also support the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other regional and subregional organizations, play a leading role in the political settlement of the Somalia issue and facilitate an improvement in the situation in the Horn of Africa.

At the same time, the Security Council should send more positive signals on the Somalia sanctions and make timely adjustments to the relevant sanctions in keeping with the developing situation and the requirements of the African Union, IGAD and the Somali Government.

Fourthly, efforts must be intensified to address the root causes of conflicts and promote Somalia's economic and social development. The protracted conflicts there have dealt a heavy blow to Somalia's economic and social development and given rise to serious humanitarian challenges. The international community should step up its assistance in the fields of education, health, food security and infrastructure, inter alia, with particular attention given to the pertinence and effectiveness of assistance, so as to help Somalia achieve independence and sustainable development and enable its people to enjoy peace dividends as soon as possible.

China has always supported Somalia's efforts in pursuit of peace and development, actively participated in the Somali peace process and played a positive role in the political settlement of the Somali issue.

China has sent escort vessels to Somali waters and the Gulf of Aden and helped the countries concerned to fight piracy. During the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, China announced that it would provide 6,500 tons of food aid to Somalia. Some of that aid has arrived in Somalia and will benefit disaster-affected women, children and displaced persons.

China stands ready to continue to play a constructive role in the achievement of peace, stability and development in Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): At the outset, I should like to thank today's briefers for their presentations.

Poland welcomes the successful holding of the Somalia Partnership Forum in Mogadishu and the renewed commitment of the Somali authorities to State-building, with clearly defined objectives and timelines for political, security and economic reforms. Against that positive backdrop, we note with concern the persistence of tensions between the Federal Government and the federal member states, which pose a major obstacle to the carrying out of the tasks crucial to achieving a lasting peace in Somalia.

We call on the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states to resolve the outstanding issues through dialogue and compromise. The country cannot waste valuable time and requires consensus and concerted efforts on the part of all actors to advance political and security reforms and build a stable future for the Somali people.

With the deadline for elections approaching, we are deeply convinced that the Federal Government and the federal member states should spare no effort in working to reach an agreement on a political framework for fundamental electoral issues. In that context, we stress the importance of adopting, by the end of the year, an inclusive and credible electoral law in order to ensure that federal one-person one-vote elections are held according to the agreed timeline. We believe that peaceful, inclusive, credible and transparent universal suffrage would be a historic step in the rebuilding of a democratic Somali State.

My country remains convinced that durable peace will be hard to achieve without inclusivity and the genuine involvement of women and young people in political processes in Somalia. We underscore the importance of promoting the active participation of women in the political life of the country, including in decision-making at all levels of Government. We hope that reforms by the Government will include gender-sensitive provisions and that the means for achieving at least a 30 per cent quota of women in the Federal Parliament will be provided.

Let me reiterate that Poland commends the ambitious reform agenda set by the Federal Government and the significant progress made so far in Somalia. There is no doubt, however, that many challenges remain, including the very fragile security situation and the continued threat posed by Al-Shabaab, as well

as the slow pace of the implementation of the transition plan. The dire humanitarian situation is another cause of serious concern for us.

There is no doubt that Somalia cannot overcome those challenges alone. It is only through close cooperation and coordination among the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states, supported by the African Union, the United Nations and other international partners, that the country will be able to achieve lasting peace. The international community should continue to support the Somalis and stand ready to cooperate with the authorities, in the spirit of mutual trust and in the interest of the stability and development of Somalia.

Allow me to conclude, as always, by expressing Poland's continued appreciation for United Nations actors and the African Union Mission in Somalia for all of their efforts and sacrifices.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): I would like to thank all of our briefers for their insightful presentations.

Somalia has in the past decade made remarkable progress in establishing more functional national institutions and State-building as well as in enhancing security and stability. But today Somalia is once again at a critical juncture. The task and challenge ahead today is to consolidate the gains made and at the same time make further progress in transitioning to democracy and in State-building. Two areas are particularly crucial to achieving this objective: first, cooperation between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states and, secondly, the elections scheduled for 2020 and 2021.

On the issue of federalism and the cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states, let me first of all express our appreciation for the renewed commitment of the Somali Government to State-building at the Somalia Partnership Forum. Germany welcomes the clearly defined objectives and targets of the Mutual Accountability Framework with regard to the elections to be held in 2020 and 2021, as well as the legislative reforms concerning the political party law, the electoral bill and the constitutional review.

In order to achieve these goals, constructive political cooperation between the Federal Government and all federal member states must be given the highest priority. Unfortunately, we have not seen sufficient progress since the Somalia Partnership Forum, and we

think that coordination meetings should be resumed swiftly and take place regularly in order to resolve the outstanding issues.

Turning to the elections — the first democratic elections since 1969, as we have been reminded by our briefers — Germany underscores that credible, free and fair elections in 2020 and 2021 are absolutely key; this is obviously one of the most important tasks ahead for the Somali Government. Somalis deserve to vote in a timely fashion in a one-person one-vote election. I think that the principle of a one-person one-vote election cannot be overemphasized. Because present-day power-sharing models before the next democratic elections have, to a large extent, excluded women and some marginal groups, such one-person one-vote elections are absolutely critical from our point of view.

For this to become a reality, two conditions must be met: first, the timely adoption of the electoral code by the end of the year, which is in five weeks, and, secondly, a broad consensus across the political spectrum on the modalities of its implementation. Let me also say that we attach great importance to the vital role of the National Independent Electoral Commission. Germany has supported the Commission financially, and we would like to assure it of our continued political support for its very important and difficult work. Let me also say that, with respect to the timeline that has been agreed, in our view any extension is not an option. It would put last year's achievements at risk, and therefore the current agreed timetable should absolutely be met.

I would like to briefly refer to two or three other areas that are also very important to us. First of all, as many briefers have mentioned, the current political situation with regard to the states of Galmudug and Jubaland is an obstacle to further progress and must be tackled through dialogue and compromise. The political processes must do some major catching up in view of the 2020 elections.

My second point is about the security situation, which, unfortunately and obviously, continues to remain a huge challenge despite considerable progress achieved in the security sector. We are particularly saddened and shocked by the news that civil-society activist and former diplomat Almaas Elman was killed yesterday in the vicinity of Mogadishu airport. I extend our condolences to her family and the people of Somalia. Another reminder of the challenging security situation

is the fact that only last month the United Nations compound was again the target of an Al-Shabaab mortar attack, reminding us that the support provided by the United Nations and the African Union Mission in Somalia to the Somali authorities to fight Al-Shabaab, and their contribution to security and stability, remains absolutely crucial.

Lastly, I would also like to say a word about the current humanitarian situation. Germany remains extremely concerned about the situation and its impact on civilians. Drought and flooding, in addition to existing challenges, are a very heavy burden on Somali society. It is urgent that we continue current efforts to redress the growing food insecurity. We would like to encourage partners to continue operationalizing measures to address that nexus. The aggravating effects of climate change on Somalia's humanitarian situation and fragile statehood clearly demonstrate the challenges that climate change poses to regional stability and security, and we feel that it is high time for the Council to take due account of climate change as a factor relevant to peace and security.

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to ask Ms. Ibrahim, the Chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission, a question. I would be interested in her views on a particular issue related to the upcoming elections. Given the number of challenges, most partners and experts appear to agree that a paper-based registration process seems more practical at this stage than a biometric one, and I would be very interested to know whether she agrees with that assessment and how she envisages taking things forward.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing our condolences to the family of Almaas Elman and to the Somali people. May her soul rest in eternal peace. I would also like to express our appreciation to all the briefers for their comprehensive briefings. My statement today will focus on three issues — the political, security, and humanitarian situations.

On the first issue, we welcomed the convening of the Somalia Partnership Forum. The Mutual Accountability Framework agreed in the Forum identified priority commitments for both Somalia and international partners between now and December 2020 in the areas of inclusive politics, security and justice and economic and social development. That ambitious agenda requires not only the continued support of the international

community but also strong cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states. The two must engage in constructive dialogue to peacefully resolve all their outstanding differences.

My delegation welcomes the outreach efforts of the leadership of the Federal Government, including yesterday's meeting between President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo and his predecessors. We also support the critical role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) in promoting an inclusive political settlement led by the Somali Government. Ending the political deadlock is essential in order to accelerate progress on many fronts and to ensure that the agreed timelines are met, including for preparations towards inclusive 2020-2021 elections and for the adoption of an electoral code by the end of the year. My delegation is heartened by some encouraging developments, including the signing into law of bills on an anti-corruption commission and revenue management.

Secondly, we are very concerned about the ongoing threat posed by Al-Shabaab, including its enhanced use of improvised explosive devices and the expansion of its ability to generate revenue. My delegation condemns all of Al-Shabaab's recent attacks, including last month's mortar attacks on the compounds of the United Nations and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). We welcome the gains made through the joint operations of the Somali National Army and AMISOM in Lower Shabelle in support of the transition plan, including the capture of towns previously under Al-Shabaab control. The importance of enhanced coordination and support for stabilization efforts in recovered areas cannot be overstated. The Secretary-General's report (S/2019/884) attests to the fact that the Somali National Army has struggled to meet its force-generation target. AMISOM's reconfiguration plan must take that challenge and the joint threat assessment, in line with resolution 2472 (2019), into consideration. My delegation calls for accelerated and coordinated international assistance to support force generation and build a well-trained and -equipped Somali security force that will eventually be able to take over security responsibilities.

Lastly, we must not forget that the efforts to promote peace and stability in Somalia are taking place against the backdrop of a troubling humanitarian situation. In 2019 alone, more than 300,000 people have been displaced by drought and conflict, adding to the 2.6 million internally displaced persons. The

recent flooding also displaced tens of thousands of people. Overall, 2.1 million people are facing acute food insecurity. Regrettably, attacks on humanitarian actors and the creation of obstacles to their work persist in Somalia, exacerbating the already challenging and dangerous operating environment. My delegation stresses the imperative of fully protecting civilians and respecting human rights and international humanitarian law, and calls for safe, unhindered access for humanitarian assistance.

I would like to conclude by commending the Federal Government for demonstrating leadership and determination in implementing its reform agenda, some aspects of which are beginning to bear fruit. I want to affirm Indonesia's respect for Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to pay the highest tribute to UNSOM, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, AMISOM and all the actors working to bring peace and stability in Somalia.

Mr. Repkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General James Swan for his comprehensive briefing on developments in Somalia. We also thank the other briefers for the information they have shared with us. We join other speakers in expressing our condolences in connection with the tragic death of Ms. Almaas Elman.

Russia supports Mogadishu's efforts to achieve domestic political and socioeconomic stability. We are committed to working diligently in the Security Council to facilitate a resolution to the crisis in Somalia while preserving both its unity and territorial integrity. We note the importance of the general elections planned for 2020 and 2021 for strengthening Somali statehood. We welcome the steps taken by the Somali authorities to prepare for that event, which is historic in every sense, with the holding of a popular vote based on the principle of one person, one vote, for the first time in 50 years. Somalia's National Independent Electoral Commission is now functioning smoothly, and the National Electoral Security Task Force has been established with the support of international partners. In our view, the next logical steps are enacting an electoral law and introducing the necessary constitutional amendments. In that connection, we welcomed Mogadishu's commitment, affirmed at the Somalia Partnership Forum at the beginning of October, to meeting the deadlines for those undertakings. We hope the process will continue to develop according to plan.

The situation in Somalia remains highly volatile. The Federal Government is dealing with numerous challenges, including the need to restore State institutions and establish a dialogue between the centre and the regions, as well as among the regions themselves. We call for continued efforts to strike a balance of interests among all clans. We believe that the federal states' ultimatums with regard to Mogadishu and their lack of commitment to constructive cooperation, along with the conflicts between individual regions, threaten to unleash a spiral of decentralizing trends. That hampers the national dialogue and makes it difficult to organize collective efforts on major issues on Somalia's domestic agenda. We are pleased about the results that the Federal Government achieved in the reconciliation processes in Galmudug and South-West states. That success should be developed further. We call for intensifying efforts to build bridges with the Jubaland and Puntland authorities.

We are concerned about the increase in Al-Shabaab's activity, which is producing growing numbers of casualties among civilians as well as personnel of the Somali National Army and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), including foreign specialists. We believe that AMISOM is an essential component in countering Al-Shabaab, and we call on the international community to continue the agreed measures to build up the capacity of the Somali National Army and AMISOM. While it is clear that African peacekeepers cannot remain in Somalia indefinitely, the drawdown of the Mission should be carried out in stages, based on the level of the Somali National Army's readiness to provide security independently to the State and its citizens. Given the difficult humanitarian situation in Somalia, the Russian Federation will continue to provide assistance to the country and to Somali refugees in neighbouring countries through earmarked contributions to the relevant World Food Programme funds. We also intend to continue to provide training to Somali civilian personnel.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize once again that the only way to effectively combat all these challenges is through strict respect for the sovereignty of Somalia and non-interference by foreign players in its internal affairs.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I thank the Special Representative for his briefing and all the work that he and his team do on the ground. I also thank our colleague on the screen for all the great work that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) does and the sacrifices of the AMISOM troop-contributing countries, alongside the Somali national security forces, as they fight Al-Shabaab. And I am very grateful to our civil-society briefers.

I would also like to join others in extending the United Kingdom's condolences to the family of Ms. Almaas Elman, the aid worker and advocate for survivors of sexual violence in Somalia who was so tragically killed yesterday. As others have noted, her sister Ilwad was here in the Council just two days ago during our meeting on the importance of peace and reconciliation (see S/PV.8668). Our deepest sympathies and condolences go to their family.

I can be brief, because many colleagues have drawn attention to the points that I wanted to make. We are very worried by the floods and the people affected and displaced by them. We are supporting Somalia in relief efforts by contributing drinking water, hygiene supplies and health services, and we will continue to be a friend of Somalia in that regard. We hope that Member States will provide sustained humanitarian funding.

We have been watching the Somalia Partnership Forum carefully and hope that it will now work closely with the international community to implement the milestones agreed on. The United Kingdom's total spending for next year in Somalia is more than \$400 million. We therefore hope that the commitments that Somalia has made on debt relief, security-sector reform, operations from force generation and the electoral law and constitutional review will be fulfilled. We commend Somalia's ambition to fully re-engage with the international financial institutions and hope for further progress. I believe that there have been recent positive discussions between the ministers of finance of the Federal Government and the federal member states, which shows that cooperation can happen.

I want to concentrate my remarks on the elections. We are at a critical juncture. The citizens of Somalia, as we heard from Mr. Moallim, have asked for one-person-one-vote elections in 2020 and 2021. It is vital to ensure that there is no delay in delivering peaceful, inclusive, credible and transparent elections, in line with the provisional Constitution, as we heard from the Special Representative. Specifically, and as the

Special Representative said, we agree that an affordable and implementable electoral model should be signed into law by the end of this year, which was agreed to at the Somalia Partnership Forum. We also need to see an amended political parties act. And we believe that those laws should be based on a broad national consensus agreed to by the Federal Government and federal member states.

I was pleased that so many colleagues drew attention to the issue of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all stages, and that is something that we too feel is important, alongside freedom of the media, which is another vital cornerstone of a credible and peaceful election. Above all, we join others in calling for sustained dialogue and cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states. That will not only aid the elections but will help complete the journey towards debt relief. We urge all the parties to engage in dialogue to resolve the situation in Jubaland and make progress on reconciliation efforts and the organization of regional elections in Galmudug.

The United Nations and the African Union and their member States, as well as the European Union, have an important role to play in Somalia, but the initiative on dialogue must come from Somali leaders at the Federal and state levels. To end where I began, there is a huge task coming in future years, which is that of delivering a transition to Somali-led security. As I said, the commitment of AMISOM and the Somali national forces is to be commended, and we will continue to support that.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

We will hear from the Special Representative in consultations, but the representative of Germany addressed a question to Ms. Ibrahim about elections, and I give her the floor to answer it.

Ms. Ibrahim: I would like to thank the members of the Security Council for their condolences to the family of Ms. Almaas Elman. I know that family has a background of working on peace. Her father, with whom I had the opportunity to work, was a remarkable person who worked for peace, and her mother is also doing tremendous work in peacebuilding. It is really a tragedy and disaster for Somalia to continue to see such losses as Somali citizens continue to work hard to achieve peace and stability in Somalia. We have lost so much. Ms. Elman is not the only thing that we have

lost, and if we do not try to stop that, we will lose even more. I myself am a victim of that loss, because my husband, who was working for peace and development, was killed too. I am not alone in this, because there are others, too. But in spite of that we must keep working together to overcome our problems, build up Somalia and consolidate a Somali State. We will prevail if we continue on our path.

I will now respond to some of the questions. First, there are several reasons why one-person-one-vote elections are important for Somalia as opposed to the clan model. If we go back to the selection methods that we have been using, the corruption will get worse. Some politicians talk about the enhanced 2016 election. We say that it was enhanced in terms of corruption because there was a great deal of vote buying and corruption. Somalia therefore continues to sustain the corruption status.

Another matter is the possibility of Al-Shabaab becoming part of the parliamentarians because recently Al-Shabaab has been calling together the elders in areas it controls and providing training and instruction, directing them as to whom they should nominate and elect. That is a great risk.

The exclusion of women and minorities is another issue. If we go back to a clan-based election, women will not have any opportunity. Two weeks ago, there was a consultation meeting with the ulema or sheikhs. Their point was to exclude women's participation in Parliament or the Ministerial Council. That is why we need a one-person one-vote election in order to give opportunities to women, minorities and marginalized groups.

Another question concerns why it is not a paper-based election versus biometric. First of all, there is no census in Somalia. No one knows how many people can vote. Also, there was a war among Somalis, or clan fighting. No one trusts anyone else. Every clan says that it has a majority and that it must have more seats than the others. So how can that be clarified? It would be difficult.

Another issue is that most Somalis have the same name. Many people are called Mohamed, Mohamed Ali and so on and there is no photograph identification, since we do not have a census. How can we differentiate between people? How can one say that this is Mohamed and he is also Mohamed if there is nothing on which to really base that?

But, most importantly, two years ago, the National Independent Electoral Commission and the United Nations convened a meeting with an international organization supported by the United States Agency for International Development. Together, we carried out a feasibility study, which was based on the election, whether people wanted one and if there was an election, how good would they want the voter registration to be. We went to all the federal member states and met all the leaders and all sectors of civil society. We met women and young people separately, as well as the sheikhs. Every Somali said they did not trust a piece of paper. So how can we adopt something that people do not want?

When we returned, we decided to study what kind of biometric system would be possible for us economically as well as technically. The Integrated Election Support Group and its creative team provided us the most knowledgeable experts on election processes. We sat together several times and discussed what kind of biometric system we should choose. They presented us with different kinds of biometric systems, which we studied one by one. We did not choose the most expensive or most complex technologically but the simplest, which is just taking a photograph so that we know who is voting. That is the biometric system that we are using, and it is what the Somalis want. Some international partners are now asking why we are not using paper. Why did they not ask two years ago when the Commission approved it. The Commission approved it two years. We have studied it and we know what works for Somalis.

Regarding the election modalities, in, I think, July 2018, the federal member states and the Federal Government went to Baidoa and came up with modalities that they had decided. They were then discussed by the Ministry of the Interior, which was preparing the draft electoral law and included them. The choice of modalities now depends on Parliament. That does not mean going back to the federal member states or to civil society. They have been discussed, agreed and signed. That is now with Parliament in the electoral law. So we are waiting for the electoral law.

The President: I thank Ms. Ibrahim for the clarifications she has provided.

I now give the floor to the representative of Somalia.

Mr. Osman (Somalia): At the outset, I wish to extend the appreciation of the Federal Government to the briefers — Ambassador Swan, Special Representative

of the Secretary-General; Ambassador Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia; Ms. Halima Ibrahim, Chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission; and Mr. Osman Moallim, Executive Director of Somalia Youth Development Network.

Together, their insights give us an overview of the significant progress that Somalia continues to make, and their work is contributing to the vision of Somalia's future that has been clearly set out by the Federal Government of Somalia. That vision was endorsed and strongly supported at the Somalia Partnership Forum, convened by the Federal Government of Somalia with its partners in Mogadishu on 1 and 2 October. The Forum was an important opportunity to set out the Federal Government's reform agenda and the significant progress that has already been achieved and to secure partner support for the remaining challenges.

We now have an agreed direction for the coming year and Somalia's priorities are very clear. We intend to conclude the constitutional review process and to continue preparations to hold one-person one-vote elections in the last quarter of 2020. Furthermore, we are defeating the terrorist group Al-Shabaab through offensive operations led by the Somali National Army as we strengthen our security institutions and processes to support our security forces and protect our people and territory.

We are a step closer to meeting the ambitious benchmarks in the fourth staff-monitored programme of the International Monetary Fund early next year. We continue to build Somalia's resilience to weather events, both drought and flooding, while improving social services for all Somalis.

This is a bold reform agenda, but the Federal Government is fully committed to achieving it with the support of our partners. We urge all partners to redouble their efforts to help us to achieve these objectives and to align their support to these agreed priorities.

The Federal Government of Somalia recognizes that our goals will not be met without the cooperation and engagement of the federal member states. They are a vital component of the governance in Somalia. It is essential that we work in partnership in the national interest.

President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo and the Federal Government of Somalia are currently

engaged in a dialogue with all federal member states and expect an agreed blueprint to advance the national interests of Somalia. We are committed to ensuring that all federal member states play their part and we urge our partners to support us in holding the leadership of each member state accountable and to contribute to the Somalia of the future, not the past.

That means undertaking genuine reconciliation efforts and holding fair, transparent and inclusive elections, not only at the federal level but also at the level of the federal member states. Where the electoral process does not meet those criteria, the Federal Government of Somalia will not recognize the outcome, and we call on our partners to do the same.

We are working to overcome past practices of electoral interference and influence over the independent bodies appointed to administer elections. Therefore, despite ongoing political disagreements, we call on our partners to continue to support the National Independent Electoral Commission on the whole, including technically and financially, with a view to implementing the agreed critical benchmarks, such as voter registration, and thereby moving a step closer to fulfilling the promise of elections in 2020-2021.

In order to build trust in the Government, we must hold the Federal and state-level Governments to a higher standard of conduct than in the past. Falling back on old, destructive ways certainly has no place in Somalia's bright future. We are making significant progress in laying the foundations for more inclusive and transparent governance. In Galmudug, reconciliation efforts are ongoing and we are working with all the stakeholders to ensure that communities are fairly represented and that elections can be held under a unified Galmudug administration.

In Jubaland, the Federal Government of Somalia and the international community are engaging with all stakeholders, including members of the local authorities, with a view to finding a way forward and allowing the people of Jubaland the same opportunities for an inclusive and forward-looking state administration. The Federal Government of Somalia is continuing to make preparations for the holding of one-person one-vote elections in the last quarter of 2020. To do that, the Somalia Partnership Forum is committed to passing the electoral law by the end of December and to concluding a review of the Constitution by June 2020. Just yesterday, President Mohamed Abdullahi

Mohamed Farmajo met with two of Somalia's former Presidents — His Excellency Sheikh Sharif Ahmed and His Excellency Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. The President is also meeting all other political parties and peaceful opposition leaders this coming Saturday. The unity of purpose and leadership shown by President Mohamed Farmajo in convening to meet those former Heads of State and other opposition leaders sends a strong signal of Somalia's commitment to holding truly historic democratic elections next year.

Somalia also continues to make strides in strengthening security. Operations have continued in Lower Shabelle in order to better protect Mogadishu and form part of a strategic Mogadishu security plan. For the first time, the Somali National Army is capable of holding ground and can successfully repel vicious Al-Shabaab attacks. We pay tribute to the African Union and our colleagues from the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) who fight alongside the Somali security forces, and we extend our sincere thanks to the troop- and police-contributing countries to AMISOM, who demonstrate every day their solidarity in our fight against terrorism. Another significant step in that direction was the passing of the anti-corruption bill, signed into law by President Farmajo in September. That forms part of a wider package of reforms designed to tackle corruption and to ensure that funds are not diverted from urgent national priorities.

In order to fund those priorities, in October the Cabinet approved a budget of \$350 million for the years 2019-2020. That rise in revenue was made possible by fiscal reform and the Somali population, who worked with the Government to collect taxes. Fifty-five per cent of the budget will be financed by internal revenue sources, while the deficit will be financed by donor support, representing another significant step on Somalia's path to self-sufficiency. As we build on those reforms, we are working steadily towards the decision point on debt relief in early 2020, and we count on all our partners to support us in achieving that important milestone for Somalia.

Despite our energetic efforts, Somalia continues to face significant challenges, and no more so than in facing severe weather events. The rains experienced across central and southern Somalia have brought destruction and devastation to hundreds of thousands of people. The Federal Government of Somalia has responded with emergency support and relief efforts,

but in parallel we are putting in place measures that will enable Somalia to build resilience in order to better deal with future events of that kind. Infrastructure, water management and the management of the water economy are critical components of that strategy, and the Federal Government of Somalia is committed to addressing not only the immediate needs of those impacted by the floods, but the long-term needs of Somalia in coping with severe weather events in the future. We therefore emphasize the importance of the nexus between humanitarian and development assistance.

In conclusion, significant sustainable change, especially in the complex process of State-building, is taking place at a steady rhythm of incremental progress.

The briefers today have set out how that change is taking place on the ground. We are cognizant that the change might be viewed as not happening quickly enough or immediately enough, as numerous obstacles remain. But with the strong commitment of the Federal Government and people of Somalia and the continuing support of our partners, we will continue to overcome them one step at a time.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.