MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
ON SOMALIA

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NEW YORK, USA

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR RAMTANE LAMAMRA,
COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY OF THE AFRICAN UNION
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Your Excellency the President of the Security Council,

Members of the Council,

Your Excellency, Mr. Moses Wetangula, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kenya, Chairperson of the African Union Peace and Security Council,

Your Excellency the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for Political Affairs,

Representatives of the Chair of IGAD and Troop Contributing Countries to AMISOM, Honorable Minister of Defence of the Republic of Uganda,

Representatives of international partners,

Excellencies,

Let me start by expressing, on behalf of the African Union, our gratitude to the Security Council for according us this opportunity to address it at such a critical juncture in the Somalia peace process. The Council’s decision to schedule, at the request of the AU, the present meeting on Somalia is a testament to the importance that it attaches to the situation in that country, as well as to its commitment to build the kind of partnership that the challenges in Somalia and elsewhere in Africa so urgently require.

African Commission Chairperson Jean Ping sincerely regrets that prior commitments have prevented him from attending this session. He extends his compliments to the Council and its members, confident that today’s deliberations will pave the way for further progress in the relentless search for lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

Excellencies,

More than a year ago, I had the opportunity to address this august organ on Somalia, to convey the request made then by the AU Peace and Security Council at its 245th meeting, held on 15 October 2011, and to appeal for the enhancement of the United Nations support package to AMISOM together with. Subsequently, the Security Council adopted resolution 1964 (2010), which authorized the Secretary-General to continue to provide support for an enhanced troop strength of 12,000. That the Security Council decision fell short of what the AU requested is in no doubt. Yet it represented a step forward, and we endeavored to make the best out of it, in support of the aspirations of the Somali people to lasting peace, security and stability.

Today, I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made on the ground by the forces of AMISOM and those of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). For the first time in 20 years, almost the whole of Mogadishu is now under the control of the TFG. In addition, military operations in other parts of the country by the TFG forces, with the
support of Kenya and Ethiopia, have further weakened Al Shabaab extremists and other anti-peace elements.

The Somali population has been quick to embrace the relative peace brought about by the efforts of AMISOM and TFG forces. Since August 2011, the capital, Mogadishu has been experiencing something of a revival: roads are being repaired, homes re-built, and markets reopened; real estate prices along Via Moscow, for instance, have doubled; and people are now staying out in the streets until late into the night, despite the omnipresent threat of terrorist attacks. Traffic at the Aden Abdulleh International Airport has tripled, while the line of ships waiting to dock at the sea port grows longer by the day. Mogadishu has played host to several high-profile visitors, including the African Union Commission Chairperson’s Jean Ping, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the President of the UNGA, President Ismael Omar Guelleh of Djibouti and Prime Minister Recep Erdogan of Turkey.

These achievements were made by an under-resourced and under-equipped AMISOM. They also came at a considerable cost to the Mission. Scores of young Burundians and Ugandans, fighting side-by-side with their Somali comrades, have paid the ultimate price in the line of duty. The month of October 2011 was particularly difficult, as AMISOM and TFG forces stepped-up their efforts to secure the capital after the forced withdrawal of Al Shabaab. At the AU, we are determined to ensure that the sacrifices they have made, on behalf of all of us, are not in vain. We are forever grateful to the people and Governments of Burundi and Uganda. Their actions are a true reflection of African solidarity and our commitment to stand by the people of Somalia at their hour of need.

Excellencies,

In spite of the severe challenges of a devastating humanitarian crisis, the gains made on the ground have created an unprecedented window of opportunity to further peace and reconciliation, and help the Somali people open a new chapter in their troubled history. This is all the more true as progress is also being made on the political front, particularly since the middle of last year. Implementation of the Kampala Accord of June 2011 and the Political Roadmap of September 2011 is generally on course.

Undoubtedly, some challenges remain to be overcome. One could, in this respect, point to the prevailing situation in the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP), which has been embroiled in a paralysis and, on one occasion, a brawl as a result of the illegal removal of the Speaker of the TFP, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden. Yet, such difficulties are to be expected given the complexity and protracted nature of the conflict in Somalia. In a way, this situation is as much a reflection of deficiencies in leadership from the Somali stakeholders, as it is an indication of our failure, as international community, to provide a support that is truly commensurate to the challenges at hand.

It is against this background that the African Union and IGAD, recognizing the urgent need to help the Somali people sustain this renewed momentum in the peace process, decided to pursue the critical approach of enhancing the capacity of AMISOM and TFG forces.
I am glad to report that the Strategic Concept for future AMISOM operations, whose development involved broad consultations with Somali authorities, the Troop Contributing Countries, UN and other partners in Addis Ababa, Nairobi and Mogadishu, as well as a series of planning sessions, has been endorsed by the AU Peace and Security Council, at its 306th meeting held in Addis Ababa on 5 January 2012.

The UN Secretariat deserves our highest commendation for fully supporting this process, including the deployment of a team of competent UN planners who worked very closely with the Commission to finalize the Strategic Concept. This document is therefore the product of a joint effort. Essentially, the Strategic Concept provides for the following:

a) increase of the level of UN-supported AMISOM uniformed personnel from 12,000 to 17,731, including 5,700 from the new troop contributing countries, the Djiboutian contingent and the rehatted Kenyan troops, as well as AMISOM police component;

b) deployment by Burundi and Uganda of additional troops to reach the current UN-authorized strength of 12,000;

c) extension of AMISOM’s area of responsibility, including the insertion of AMISOM troops in the areas liberated with the support of Ethiopia;

d) provision of the required force enablers and multipliers, as well as logistical support to other components of AMISOM; and

e) enhancement of the TFG security and allied forces, to enable and empower them to play an increased role in the implementation of the Strategic Concept.

Excellencies,

I want to reiterate the call made by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union for the UN Security Council to expeditiously consider and authorize the support required for the implementation of the Strategic Concept for future AMISOM operations. The Strategic Concept relies very heavily on the provision of force enablers and multipliers, logistical support, funding for reimbursement of COEs, self-sustenance of troops, and other critical requirements. We remain appreciative of the support being provided on the ground to AMISOM by the United Nations and we certainly look forward to its continuation.

The AU Commission, on its part, will accelerate the preparations and consultations on the follow-on planning requirements, through continued engagement with the UN, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda as TCCs, IGAD countries and other partners. This will include the elaboration and early finalization of a revised AMISOM Concept of Operations (CONOPs), to adequately address all relevant pending issues, such as command and control, liaison and coordination, and troops-to-task per sector.

Obviously, the military efforts of AMISOM and TFG forces are designed to achieve the political objectives that are articulated in the Roadmap. With the coming in of Kenyan forces, as an integral part of AMISOM, and the support provided by Ethiopia, several new areas throughout the country are being liberated from insurgents. In this context, it is important to ensure that there is no a political vacuum in the liberated regions. This highlights the need for increased political outreach and reconciliation on the part of the TFG.
as well as recovery support. Therefore, coherence between military operations and political strategy remains imperative and is adequately articulated in the Strategic Concept.

Consequently, the African Union Commission will continue to support the concerted efforts of the Special Representative of the Chairperson, Amb. Boubacar Diarra, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Amb. Augustine Mahiga, and the IGAD Facilitator Hon. Kipruto Kirwa, to assist the Somali leaders and other stakeholders to focus on the implementation of the Kampala Accord and Political Roadmap in the light of progress so far achieved, in particular in the GAROWE Conference on Constitution making.

Excellencies,

Somalia is at a crossroads. We should not relent in urging the Somali stakeholders that they should take advantage of the current momentum to, once and for all, bring to an end the violence and suffering visited upon their people by two decades-long of conflict and destruction. We should insist on the need for them to fully comply with the commitments contained in the Kampala Accord and Mogadishu Roadmap. We should continue stressing that they have the primary responsibility for achieving lasting peace and reconciliation in their country.

At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that the Somalis cannot succeed without adequate support from the international community. As stressed by the Chairperson of the Commission, in his 15 October 2010 report on Somalia to the PSC, we cannot hide from the fact that, so far, the international community is yet to fully assume its responsibility in Somalia. Its action in Somalia has been belated (hardly keeping pace with developments on the ground), partial (forcefully addressing some aspects of the crisis, for instance the scourge of piracy, and not giving sufficient attention to the action required on the mainland) and inadequate (the resources mobilized so far are incommensurate with the challenges). The international community has not shown the sense of anticipation and proactiveness required; neither did it seize opportunities, when they presented themselves, to further peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

Today, we have the opportunity, learning from our past experiences and shortcomings, to turn around the situation in Somalia for the greater good of its long-suffering people and in support of regional stability and international security. As the present deliberations proceed, I have no doubt that we are all fully aware of what is at stake. Failure to act now will be extremely costly.

While reiterating our gratitude to the Security Council for the steps it has already taken in support of AMISOM, we cannot but call on you to do more, to enable us all cover the remaining ground in our long journey towards lasting peace, reconciliation and security in Somalia.
In closing, I want to again express the African Union’s appreciation to South Africa, as President of the Council, for its sustained efforts to further the partnership between the AU and the UN, appreciation also to IGAD, for its leadership and resolve, to the AMISOM TCCs, including the new contingents from Djibouti and Kenya, for their commitment, and to the Secretary-General and your Council for the continued attention being paid to the situation in Somalia.

I thank you for your kind attention.