REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY
H.E. AMB. SMAIL CHERGUI

AU PSC MEETING ON AMISOM
8 MAY 2020
H.E Professor Mafa Sejanamane, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the AU and Chair of the PSC for the month of May 2020

Distinguished Members of the Peace and Security Council;

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by congratulating the Kingdom of Lesotho for assuming the Chairmanship of the Peace and Security Council for the Month of May 2020, and also express gratitude to the Members of the Peace and Security Council for convening this virtual meeting. As the Commission, we are pleased with the way this Council has ensured it remain seized on peace and security issues on the continent, despite the challenges posed by the Novel Corona Virus Pandemic.

Allow me to commend the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS) for their efforts and progress in facilitating implementation of the tasks set out in the Somali Transition Plan (STP). This includes ongoing political and governance processes to enhance relationship between the Federal Government of Somalia and its Member States. We also take note of the enactment of the National Electoral Bill into law to guide the direct elections that is scheduled for November this year; as well as plans for the completion of the Constitution Review Process (CPR) by June 2020 and for reaching the Decision Point on debt relief. The Commission trusts that this will facilitate new development financing and boost Somalia’s economy to better address poverty, and ensure sustainable development for its people.

The Commission is aware of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic which continue to claim lives, exacerbating the risk of food insecurity, hindering the capacity of the Federal Government and Member States to deliver services to the Somali people as well as disrupt livelihoods and increasing the rate of unemployment in Somalia. Thus there is dire need for the promotion of a people and partnership centric approach in supporting the Somali people. Nonetheless, the continuous threat posed by Al Shabaab
and Other Armed Groups (OAG) in Somalia and beyond, keeps evolving. It is clear that these are serious threats that requires decisive military action, couples with supporting stabilization activities, and not one that the police can fully currently address. It is important to note that, AMISOM continues to support implementation of the Transition Plan as outlined in the CPs report, to consolidate the gains achieved.

Council may recall that four years ago in Djibouti, in Feb 2016, during the AMISOM TCCs Summit, which was hosted by the President of Djibouti, His Excellency Ismail Omar Guelleh and also attended by the PM of Somalia, the Commission made its position clear, that it wanted to see a clear exit plan for AUs Mission from Somalia. We called for a Comprehensive approach to support Somalia address its stability and security. We gave ourselves up to Oct 2020 to see progress. The Commission is happy to note the development and adoption of strategy on the Comprehensive Approach to Security (CAS) by Somalia, AU and its partners. The Commission is also happy to note the subsequent development by Somalia of the Somalia Transition Plan (STP), which was endorsed by this Council and subsequently the UNSC. However, the Commission is greatly concerned by the inability of all the key players and implementers of the above two strategies, to effectively play their part. This inability or partial ability continues to affect our collective contributions to support Somalia.

We are aware of the political developments in European Union, the effect of the current COVID – 19 on the global economy and financing, recent and ongoing reforms in the UN, the tensions and conflict in the Gulf countries, the expansion of terrorism in Sahel region, the increasing reach of Al Shabaab in Eastern Africa. All these have direct influence on our mission in Somalia.

Your Excellencies, as we deliberate on AUs continued engagement in Somalia and future of our Mission, by considering the Report of the Chairperson to the council, copies of which were sent to you, I wish to emphasise the following five critical issues for the attention of the Council.
In its 901st sitting, Council requested on the Commission to undertake a comprehensive Assessment of the situation in Somalia and the future of AMISOM and submit the report for consideration of the Council before 27 May 2020. The report of this assessment is a critical as it will present options to the Council on what the AU could do in Somalia do. The Commission is already in the process of undertaking this assessment.

Secondly, it is critical to review the two strategies I highlighted above and wish to report that we reached consensus on them during the High Level meeting which I co-chaired with His Excellency, the Prime Minister of Somalia. To review the Somalia Transition Plan and its implementation modalities, under the Leadership of FGS, with close coordination with AU, UN, EU and key bilateral partners, in order to align it with realities on the ground. To undertake an independent Comprehensive Assessment of the situation in Somalia with the close coordination of FGS, AU, UN, EU and Key bilateral partners in order to present options for the roles of AU, UN, EU and bilateral development and security partners in the implementation of the CAS in Somalia.

Third, we need to realistically consider the challenges of resources and funding to our Mission, and engage our Heads of States to provide possible solutions.

Fourth, whereas the Commission is happy to note the positive initiatives undertaken by IGAD and the Heads of States of Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Commission wishes to request that this initiatives and other similar one be are strengthened, as they will help reduce tensions and support FGS strengthen ties with its FMS and its neighbours.

Fifth, we must guard jealously the hard worn achievements in Somalia. Many Somalis, AMISOM and other bilateral partners have sacrificed their lives in the quest to make Somalis enjoy the peace which has been robbed from them over the last 30 years. Many of our partners, EU, UN too, have sacrificed a lot in other ways and we cannot therefore collectively allow these achievements and sacrifices to be wasted or reversed. With all these
support and sacrifices, FGS is showing tremendous progress. But we cannot be in Somalia indefinitely. We need to continue with a smooth, respectful and honorable transition. It is for this reasons, that the Commission recommends a one year extension of AMISOMs mandate, at its current strength. With a reviewed STP and a productive outcome of the Independent Comprehensive assessment of the situation in Somalia, the Council and the Union will be on the right track in our support to Somalia.

With these remarks, I therefore urge the Honourable council to positively consider the Report of the CP to the council.

I thank you.