UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
MEETING ON THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
9 NOVEMBER 2015

STATEMENT OF THE PERMANENT OBSERVER OF THE AFRICAN UNION TO THE
UNITED NATIONS, AMBASSADOR ANTONIO TETE
STATEMENT OF THE PERMANENT OBSERVER OF THE AFRICAN UNION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

- Right Honorable Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, President of the United Nations Security Council for the month of November 2015,
- Your Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations,
- Distinguished members of the Security Council,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today’s meeting is taking place against the backdrop of major achievements in Somalia towards the realization of Vision 2016. For this, we must commend the leadership of the Federal Government of Somalia and the Somali Security Forces. We must also commend the countries of the region, which, through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, have remained actively engaged in the efforts to achieve peace, security and reconciliation in Somalia.

I pay tribute to all the uniformed and civilian personnel of the African Union Mission in Somalia, as well as to the Troop and Police Contributing Countries, namely Burundi, Djibouti, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda. Since their deployment, which now enters its ninth year, the AMISOM personnel have displayed unparalleled commitment, sense of duty and courage. At the African Union, we take particular pride in their achievements. The huge sacrifices they have made have enabled Somalia to open a new and more hopeful chapter in its troubled history. We are determined to ensure that the sacrifices made are not in vain.

I would like to commend the United Kingdom for convening this meeting, which will provide us with an opportunity to take stock of the situation, including the implementation of Vision 2016, and agree on how best to address the remaining tasks. I acknowledge the presence of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which is yet a further testimony of the importance that the United Kingdom attaches to the situation in Somalia and a reflection of its determination to assist that country overcome the daunting challenges confronting it.

I commend the members of the United Nations Security Council for their continued commitment to the quest for peace and reconciliation in Somalia. Over the years, they have continued to extend significant support to the African Union-led efforts aimed at neutralizing the Al Shabaab terrorist group and creating conditions for the successful conclusion of the ongoing political process.

It would be remiss of me if I did not, once again, put on record the African Union’s deep appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts towards the promotion of peace and security on the African continent, and in Somalia in particular. I have no doubt, as we move ahead, that we can continue to rely on his support.
The deployment of AMISOM and the progress made in the implementation of its mandate would not have been possible without the support of other African Union partners. These include the European Union and its Member States, as well as the United States of America.

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we gather here today, we should applaud the Federal Government of Somalia for re-affirming its commitment to respecting the constitutionally mandated terms of the legislature and executive. These, as you all know, will expire in August and September 2016, respectively.

In this respect, the recent launch of the National Consultative Forum on Elections is another promising step. The Forum agreed on the consultative process and methodology, and began the initial debate on the approaches to the electoral process. In just a few days, public consultations on the electoral process will commence in various parts of Somalia. It is our hope that the national and regional stakeholders will maintain the unity of purpose they have shown thus far.

Significant progress has also been made against key milestones in the completion of Somalia’s federal state formation process and towards reviewing the Provisional Constitution. These positive developments have greatly enhanced the prospects for the successful conclusion of the political process. Much remains to be done though. Against this backdrop, all international partners should continue to provide the required support to the Somali stakeholders in order to overcome the remaining challenges. The African Union, including through AMISOM, whose mandate, as determined by the Peace and Security Council, also includes a political component, remains committed to continue supporting and facilitating these processes, in close coordination with IGAD, the United Nations and other partners.

Nevertheless, while reviewing the ambitious state-building agenda that lies ahead, we must not shy away from assessing the effectiveness of the efforts deployed on the ground, the extent to which we are promoting a truly Somali owned process and the level of coordination among the international partners. It is only through such an approach that we can ensure that we are taking the realities on the ground in Somalia into account at every step and maximize the impact of our support.

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Somalia, we are now facing a threat of a different nature than what we were contending with just a year ago. AMISOM and the Somali National Army have conducted a number of successful offensives, the latest being Operation Juba Corridor. While these offensives have continued to deplete Al Shabaab capabilities by limiting their sources of revenue and freedom of movement, AMISOM was also, as a result, compelled to extend its lines of communication. The Mission now covers an expanded Area of Operation.
Under pressure to maintain relevance, Al Shabaab is taking advantage of these extended lines of communication to conduct targeted attacks against AMISOM and the Somali National Army defensive positions. The group has also continued to conduct asymmetric attacks, with increasing efficiency and lethality on the Government and the local population alike. The most recent attack was just a week ago on a popular hotel in Mogadishu patronized by Government officials. These attacks serve as a constant reminder of the fragility of security, not just in Mogadishu, but in Somalia as a whole.

Another source of concern is a potential alliance between Al Shabaab and the so-called Islamic State. As a result of their depleted capability and desperation for support, Al Shabaab is exploring this avenue for survival by possibly shifting alliances to more resourced international terrorist groups. This is a worrying development that all stakeholders must closely monitor.

To address the evolving security challenges, there is a pressing need to step up efforts to complete the expansion phase, with a view to liberating the remaining areas controlled by Al Shabaab terrorist group. This will pave the way for the transition to the stabilization phase by March 2016.

In line with the relevant decisions of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council, the Commission, with the involvement of all concerned stakeholders, including the United Nations, has developed a revised Concept of Operations for AMISOM. This document was forwarded to the Secretary-General by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security on behalf of the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, through a letter dated 23 October 2015, for onward transmission to the members of the Security Council.

The Strategic End-State, as identified in the CONOPS, is significantly to deplete the military and related capacity of the Al Shabaab and other armed opposition groups. Within this context, the security strategy in the period ahead is to create and preserve an enabling environment for the unfolding political, peace and reconciliation processes in Somalia.

The CONOPS addresses the challenges identified by the Joint African Union/United Nations benchmarking exercise. It is imperative to note that the most consistent view expressed during the CONOPS development was the importance of the provision of flexible and timely logistical support to AMISOM through a more responsive and robust UN Support Office to AMISOM.

It was against this background that, in its communiqué of 18 September 2015, the African Union Peace and Security Council, having welcomed the Strategic Review of the United Nations Support Office to AMISOM, underlined the imperative for UNSOA to remain an independent and dedicated capacity that reports to UN Headquarters and is accountable to the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission for all matters relating to logistical support for AMISOM. This was seen as a *sine qua non* for the delivery of logistical support in a flexible, timely and responsive manner.
While taking note of aspects of the resolution relating to UNSOA and acknowledging the advances it contains with respect to support to both AMISOM and the Somali National Security Forces, I would like to reiterate the relevance of the Peace and Security Council position as outlined above and to regret that this position was not adequately reflected in the resolution. I commend the African members of the United Nations Security Council for the sustained efforts they have made in the course of the consultations on the draft resolution for the AU’s concerns to be taken into account.

In the period ahead, the African Union will consult with the United Nations Secretariat on the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution, to ensure that the required support to AMISOM takes into account the peculiar conditions in which the Mission is operating and is delivered in a timely and responsive manner, based on the needs of the Mission and on the requests made by the AMISOM leadership.

The African Union welcomes the planned provision of in-theatre medical evacuation for the Somali Police Force. We express the hope that this step will be followed, in a not too distant future, by a logistical support package to the Somali Police Force, along the lines of the one provided to the Somali National Army. This is critical in view of the increasing role expected of the Somali Police Force in the period ahead, in the context of the revised AMISOM CONOPS.

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

While the African Union appreciates the United Nations support for AMISOM, it is also important to bear in mind that, in deploying a Mission in Somalia, the AU is acting on behalf of the United Nations Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Accordingly, the United Nations has the duty to provide all the necessary support to AMISOM, whose action aims at creating conditions conducive for the early deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation that would support the long-term stabilization and reconstruction of Somalia.

Such an enhanced support is all the more urgent and necessary as AMISOM is facing additional constraints brought about the decision of the European Union to cut the allowances to the uniformed personnel of the Mission by 20%, starting in January 2016. This measure affects the very personnel making the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty, on behalf of the entire international community. There is no doubt that this decision will have a serious adverse effect on the moral of the uniformed personnel, at a time when more is expected of AMISOM on the ground.

Let me add that the decision by the European Union will compound the serious financial gap already created by the depreciation of the Euro vis-à-vis the dollar.

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding my remarks, I would like to stress that we are in the last stretch of our long journey towards helping the Somali people and authorities bring to a definite end more
than two decades of senseless violence, untold suffering and complete anarchy, affecting both regional and international security. At this critical juncture, AMISOM and the Somali National Security Force deserve an enhanced support. Without such support, we ran the risk of undermining the tremendous achievements made at a high cost in the last nine years.

Needless to stress that our support to Somalia should go beyond security. We have to step up our efforts to address the prevailing humanitarian challenges, which were compounded by the recent flooding, resulting in further displacement of populations. We have to increase our economic and financial support to provide the much needed peace dividends to the suffering Somali population. We have to enhance our capacity building assistance for the emerging Somali state to be able to stand on its own and shoulder its responsibilities.

It should, nonetheless, be clear that ultimately, the Somali leaders have primary responsibility for responding to the aspirations of their people to peace, security and reconciliation. They ought to do more and to demonstrate the necessary leadership, vision, determination and unity of action.

I thank you.