

## **H.E. Hassan Sh. Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia's Speech at the IOM Council**

Distinguished IOM Council Members, Director General Swing, Deputy Director General Thompson, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is an honour for me to address this gathering of member states at the IOM Council today. My sincere apologies for not being able to be physically present in Geneva today. I am sure you can appreciate the difficulty of putting a new administration in place under the best of circumstance, but in Somalia the difficulties are magnified.

Somalia has long been a country on the move, with mobility being a defining feature of the nomadic culture. However, more than two decades of civil war, famine and natural disasters have left the country with a large internally displaced population. Over one million Somalis live as refugees in the surrounding region, and nearly a million have gone further afield. The complexity of the crises afflicting Somalia has also made it a transit point for precarious boat migration across the Gulf of Aden where hundreds lose their lives every year.

But today, Somalia is looking to a new horizon. With the assistance of our international partners, we managed to put extremist elements within Somalia on their heels. But Mr. Chairman, we should not rest on our laurels. There is a lot left to be done. As this Council is well aware, Somalia's problems are many. The existential threat to the Federal Republic of Somalia, namely Al-Shabaab, is not yet defeated. We are putting pressure on them from all sides, but they still pose a serious threat to peace and stability.

We must move with due diligence to stabilize the newly liberated areas. We must take concrete steps that will strengthen the Federal Republic of Somalia so that it can effectively respond to the needs of its people, be at peace with its neighbours and improve Somalia's standing at the world stage. This is why the Six Pillar Policy, which I outlined when I came to office, is playing a central role in my administration.

My administration's goal over the next four years is put in place the necessary mechanisms to: 1) create stability in the country; 2) speed up economic recovery, 3) build peace and remove the main drivers of conflicts; 4) vastly improve the Government's capacity to respond to the needs of its people by improving service delivery; 5) increase our international partnerships and create closer ties with our neighbours and friends of Somalia; 6) last but not least, Mr. Chairman, I believe that unity at home is what will propel Somalia forward.

Somalia is now at cross-roads. We have had a political and military turn-around. Now it's time to show the people the "peace dividends." One of many ways to do that is to build the capacity of the Somali institutions. Some of the programs that are currently being implemented in Somalia fit well within my Six Pillar Policy. What we now need is to increase their effectiveness and expand their reach.

We need the international partners, such as IOM to support the institutions like the Somali Disaster Management Agency (DMA). As you know, Mr. Chairman, Somalia has been in a constant state of disaster since 1991. Political, economic and environmental factors have combined to turn disasters into protracted, complex crises driving different forms of migration. As such, we need a very capable and responsive disaster management and mitigation regime. At present, the DMA does not have the capacity to manage an emergency.

We are grateful that IOM has been working with the DMA in the last six months to increase its capacity to respond to disasters.

One of my administration's primary concerns is the large number of Somalis displaced within the country. Somalia is one of three countries in the region next to Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo which hosts the highest number of Internally Displaced Persons. We currently have **1.36 million IDPs** in Somalia.

I would like to briefly mention the fact that almost half a million Somalis are still living in refugee camps in Kenya. At a regional level, there are over **1 million Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa**, the majority living in Kenya and the rest in Yemen, Ethiopia and Uganda.

We need to be prepared that one day they will want to return to their communities of origin. As more and more areas of Somalia become accessible, we will need a coordinated approach to return those who want to go back to their communities of origin. That means we need to have an open line of communication with not only the UN agencies and international organizations working in that sector, but also with the Government of Kenya, which has graciously housed Somali refugees for so long.

As you can see Mr. Chairman, I am staying on the theme of people on the move. Effective security requires effective border management, including counter piracy measures. Porous borders allow those with malicious intent to move freely across and within Somalia. We intend to stop that as part of my administration's plan to secure our borders. With the support of IOM, we have been providing training to all of our immigration officers. Under IOM's Capacity Building for Migration Management (CBMM), we have installed the necessary migration data collection equipment in order to ensure oversight on who is crossing our borders.

Mr. Chairman, it saddens me every time I see a news report of Somalis and other nationals perishing on the high seas, as they make their way through the Gulf of Aden to Yemen and beyond. Within this migratory flow, we find people with a myriad of reasons for leaving their countries of origin. Some of the major drivers for this continued displacement in the region today, unfortunately, still remain food insecurity and protracted internal armed conflict. But other important drivers, that we must not underestimate is decreasing global economic growth around the world and its subsequent huge numbers of unemployed youths. My administration intends to work with the relevant international partners to stem the flow of risky migration. I welcome any assistance that IOM can provide to that end.

Somalia's future is our youth. As you may know, according to the latest UNDP Human Development Report published earlier this year, 70 % of Somalia's population is under the age of 30. If we don't urgently, as a matter of priority, address all their basic and complex needs such as assuring them a good education and give them a fair chance in life to be able to build a future for themselves, they will not stay in our country.

They too will migrate either within the country, but more likely, they will put everything in motion to leave the country to find a better life for themselves. We want our young people to have opportunities abroad, including through legal migration for work and education, but at

the same time we need to act so that our Somali youth can see hope at home and that they can make a difference in the country's future.

Mr. Chairman, in order to have economic development, there must be political stability and a secured environment. To have a secured environment, we must have mechanisms in place to properly reintegrate those who have taken up arms against the State, including those who were captured on the battlefield or decided to give up their armed struggle to re-join Somali society (there are now an estimated 5,000 ex-combatants, including 2,000 children under the age of 18).

One of the key areas of work for IOM, along with UNPOS, and other UN agencies, in partnership with my administration, is the reintegration of disengaged ex-combatants who are deemed ready and able to return to civilian life, in accordance with international norms and the prevailing international law.

As it relates to the "peace dividends" that I mentioned earlier, programs such as the Transition Initiatives for Stabilization (TIS) being implemented by IOM in Somalia is a good model to follow. TIS is important, because it doesn't try to impose a solution on the Government or the Somali people. Its project implementation is participatory. In fact, in Mogadishu, all of the projects are selected by the District Commissioners (DCs) or their designees in meetings organized by IOM and its partners. IOM simply provides the forum and some minimal guidance to them. Individual DCs decide what is best for their district.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I, speaking on behalf of the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia, would like to see the United Nations and IOM increase their activities in Somalia through the government line ministers as their primary partner. In Somalia, we see all shades of the migration phenomenon – from forced migration within and from the country, to mixed flows transiting through, to departure and return of our best and brightest. Addressing all these aspects to the benefit of individuals and the country will require efforts for years to come.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you on behalf of the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Somali people for giving me the opportunity to speak before you and my distinguished colleagues. I would like to profess, Mr. Chairman that Somalia is on a path to peace and security and it is going to need all of the help that it can get. If organizations such as IOM walk hand in hand with the Somali Government, the people of Somalia will be on their way to a new day.

Thank you

**H.E. Hassan Sh. Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia**