

Speech by
H.E. Mr. Hailemariam Dessalegn
Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
at the
London Somalia Conference
11th May 2017

Your Excellency,

Let me begin by commending the co-chairs for organising this unique conference.

Today, I would like to make four points that I think are vitally important to ensuring lasting peace and sustainable development in Somalia

1. As you all know, our region in general, and Somalia, in particular, has been consistently targeted by terrorist attacks mainly from *al-Shabaab*. The fight against *al-Shabaab* has been progressing, successful offensives by the Somali National Army, AMISOM and friendly forces have driven *al-Shabaab* out of many towns and villages. *al-Shabaab*'s popular support is waning. Its income levels have been reduced significantly. Its ability to command and control its forces is not to the level it has been a few years back. The extremist group is on the retreat, but it still has not been eliminated. It remains dangerous with the capacity to launch terrorist attacks both in Somalia and outside.

We must, therefore, take practical measures to further intensify and better coordinate AMISOM and friendly forces along with the Somali National Army fighting against *al-Shabaab*. At this moment, our contingent in AMISOM in *Hiraan* region is fiercely fighting with *al-Shabaab* in *Halgen*. Just at this moment! So you can see how much the AMISOM force is working very hard to eliminate this menace.

We also need to develop a well-functioning Somali National Army that can effectively deal with *al-Shabaab* and progressively take over from AMISOM in the coming few years, maybe in the coming 2, 3, 4 years, we have to make it as functional as possible. The international community should continue giving political, financial and logistical support to AMISOM and Somalia's national security architecture to help stabilise Somalia.

We in the region will continue to shed our blood, pay immense sacrifices and do whatever is just and necessary to restore the long sought after peace and tranquillity in Somalia and across the region. There is no greater contribution, no greater solidarity than this!

We further need to recognise the partial lifting of the UN arms embargo on Somalia as an important step forward towards creating the necessary conditions for the further lifting of the embargo as the President of Somalia has just expressed.

2. I would like to commend the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States for the recent landmark agreement reached between them towards a genuine, inclusive political consultation in an attempt to form a stable, peaceful and democratic political process in their country. This agreement I hope will pave the way for the integration of federal and regional forces into a coherent national security architecture capable of gradually taking on lead responsibility for providing security with a view to defeating *al-Shabaab* and rebuilding the country. An inclusive process adhering and abiding by the country's constitutional division of power is critically important.
3. I want to draw your attention to the fact that the entire IGAD region has been affected by the current drought and migration situations with serious political and security implications. The number of refugees from conflict and drought-affected countries in the region crossing into neighbouring countries will continue to rise unless an intensified response mechanism has been put in place. The outbreak of the cholera epidemic in Somalia with spill-over effects is a cause for concern as well. In this regard, the situation in Somalia calls for even more close follow-up and intervention.
4. Equally supporting Somalia's economic recovery that offers Somalis livelihoods and jobs for this enterprising community and generates domestic revenue will be essential to Somalia's enduring stability and sustainable development. The Government of Somalia, Federal and State alike, has to demonstrate to its people that it is delivering. They should be at the front seat steering this process.

In conclusion, I would like to remind the conference that Somalia will continue to need substantial support from the regional and international community. Let us empower the Federal Government of Somalia to be at the centre of all these endeavours. Let us speak with one voice, with new partnership spirit. Let us be laser beam focused, follow one channel of intervention for regional and international collaborative action. This, I believe, is the only viable option. Otherwise, we can be sure that the progress will be so sluggish.

I thank you.