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**“Security and Governance in Somalia:
Consolidating Gains, Confronting Challenges, and Charting the Path Forward”**

Good afternoon and thank you Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Flake, and Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on African Affairs for the opportunity to speak with you today about the complex state of governance, development and security in Somalia. Thank you also for your continued support for our assistance programs that make a difference in the lives of millions every day.

Introduction

In 2011, the worst drought in East Africa in 60 years plunged more than 13.3 million people into crisis. USAID and the international community’s response to the devastating Horn of Africa crisis helped meet the needs of 4.6 million people across the region. Despite these efforts, in July 2011, the United Nations declared famine in two areas of Southern Somalia. Additional areas slipped into famine in the weeks to follow and at the height of the crisis, four million Somali lives depended on receiving emergency assistance.

While the drought affected millions across the region, only in Somalia did drought result in famine. This is not a designation we use lightly, as it means that at least 20 percent of households face an extreme lack of food with evidence of starvation, death, and destitution; more than 30 percent are acutely malnourished; and the mortality rate exceeds two deaths per 10,000 people a day. In Somalia, it was the deadly combination of drought, 20 years of conflict, a failed state, and the presence of armed terrorists that led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands Somalis. As Amartya Sen famously said, famines don’t happen in democracies.

Now, two years later, Somalia has its first effective central government since 1991, with democratically elected President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and a new Somali Federal Parliament. Somalis have worked hard to establish the foundation of their state based on significant efforts to forge a national consensus. And I am very pleased to report that I recently returned from an international meeting on Somalia focused on peace and prosperity, not famine. In Brussels on September 16, 58 countries and 11 international organizations gathered in support of a compact that outlines a roadmap forward. Emerging from 20 years of conflict will be a long and bumpy road, but Somalia is now heading in the right direction, with the best chance in 20 years to move toward a better future.

Today I am pleased to talk to you about this opportunity, the new frameworks and international partnerships in support of Somalia, and what USAID is doing to help Somalia transition out of conflict, fragility, and chronic poverty.

The recent, tragic al-Shabaab attack in Nairobi only underscores the need for the international community to reaffirm our commitment to assist the development of a more legitimate, inclusive democracy in Somalia. This will be central to peace, prosperity, economic growth, and to providing positive alternatives to violent extremism in those communities most at risk of recruitment and radicalization to violence.

Emerging from Two Decades of Conflict

USAID's work in Somalia for the last two decades has been defined by a prolonged complex humanitarian emergency and significant security constraints. Since 1991, widespread and persistent food insecurity, civil strife, inter-clan conflict, political instability, endemic poverty, and recurrent cycles of flooding and drought have resulted in severe humanitarian needs. For decades weak governance and insecurity have inhibited meaningful solutions and prevented humanitarian aid from reaching many who need it most.

However, over the last five years, enabled by security advancements made by the UN Security Council authorized African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), USAID has increased support focused on three areas critical for transition: stronger ties between government and community; economic opportunity through improved government-private sector relations; and improved government ability to provide basic services.

Most importantly, in 2012, USAID's democracy and governance efforts supported the formation of Somalia's first national government in 22 years. USAID and other international development partners provided logistics support and constitutional experts to help convene traditional elders and representatives from a cross-section of Somali society in a Constituent Assembly. This Assembly elected new Members of Parliament, who then selected President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud through a democratic process. USAID partners mounted a massive civic education campaign to mobilize support for the constitution-drafting process and its eventual adoption by the Constituent Assembly.

The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States: A Way Forward for Somalia

Globally, we are seeing that the greatest poverty and insecurity persists in those states plagued by weak and fragile governments and stubborn conflict. These environments require a distinct approach. In 2011, a group of 19 self-identified "conflict affected and fragile states," working with development partners and international organizations, identified a new framework for

helping countries climb out of protracted conflict called the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. The New Deal calls for a clear focus on five key peace-building and state-building goals: legitimate politics, security, justice, economic foundations, and revenues and services. Based on research by the World Bank, this approach recognizes that security, development, and governance are deeply intertwined.

The New Deal calls on Somali government officials, international donors, and civil society to work together to create a common plan. It hinges firmly on the notion of mutual accountability and a commitment by both fragile states and their international partners to build mutual trust by providing aid and managing resources more effectively and aligning these resources for results.

Since 2013, with the consolidation of the Somali Central Government and a new committed government partner, USAID has been working closely with international development partners to apply the New Deal in Somalia. Just last month in Brussels, together with our colleagues at the State Department, international development partners, and Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, we endorsed the terms of a compact focused on moving all stakeholders toward shared state-building and peace-building goals. This plan includes benchmarks for success and roles and responsibilities with clear leadership by the Government of Somalia.

Fostering a strong state-society relationship, inclusion, and dialogue are all key elements of this effort; in Somalia this means involving previously marginalized populations and vital dialogue between the Government in Mogadishu and regional entities like Somaliland and Puntland. Planning endeavors must be given the necessary time, enabling outreach to regional stakeholders and civil society. This is key to participatory democracy. We understand that such consultations are time-sensitive, but it will be time well-spent. By their nature, consultations often generate a wide range of opinions regarding the best way forward, which helps leaders chart effective solutions with buy-in from the people.

The Compact sets forth the intent of the Government of Somalia and the international community to work together to achieve vital priorities including: finalizing and adopting a federal constitution by December 2015, holding credible elections by 2016, fulfilling a 30 percent quota for women's participation in representative bodies, strengthening the capacity of state security institutions to provide basic safety and security, and implementing a national program for the treatment and handling of disengaged combatants. Importantly, it commits donor participants to provide aid in a conflict-sensitive manner, which is crucial given Somalia's complex conflict history and dynamics.

USAID's ongoing democracy and governance work is already helping to make progress toward these goals by supporting Parliament's capacity building and engagement with civil society as well as the use of financial software systems to improve revenue collection and promote accountability.

The last 20 years in Somalia have demonstrated just how fragile the state-building process can be. In Somalia, we all know that the road is long and challenges remain steep, but with its specific commitments, and committed partners, we believe the New Deal represents the best chance for peace and development in two decades.

Continuing Challenges

Today, food insecurity levels in Somalia are at the lowest point since before the 2010-11 drought. However, insecurity, lack of access, and ongoing humanitarian needs remain key challenges. These recent food security gains are very fragile with 870,000 people still in crisis and another 2.3 million people on the brink of falling back into crisis. Malnutrition levels remain elevated, with roughly 206,000 children under the age of five acutely malnourished; more than 1.1 million people are internally displaced, primarily in southern and central Somalia, in addition to the one million Somali refugees in the region.

Recent violence—including inter-communal violence in Kismayo town, surrounding areas of Lower Juba Region, and in and around Mogadishu—underscore the ongoing insecurity challenges throughout the country.

Moreover, without consistent government control over rural areas, armed groups will likely continue to limit access for humanitarian and development workers. Al-Shabaab and other violent extremist groups continue to interfere with relief operations in rural areas across southern Somalia, including in Middle Juba Region and parts of Bakool, Bay, and Gedo regions. The withdrawal of the Ethiopian National Defense Force from Bay Region’s capital city of Baidoa may further restrict humanitarian access and result in additional population displacement. Similarly, increasing security efforts by the Kenya Defense Forces may have access implications in Kismayo and re-ignite tensions in the community. Access will be vital to carrying out both continuing humanitarian efforts and expanding development activities.

Building Resilience

With climate change, we know severe weather shocks are coming even faster, making it even more impossible for the poorest communities to escape a vicious cycle of crisis. We are bringing our development and humanitarian teams together for joint analysis and planning toward the shared goal of strengthening resilience to make communities, institutions, and society as a whole better prepared for and able to recover from shocks such as the drought and famine of 2011 and 2012.

For example, humanitarian activities supporting pastoralist livelihoods are linking up with long-term economic growth efforts focused on animal health and livestock production. USAID’s Resilience Agenda—an effort to do business differently and more closely coordinate with international partners to help vulnerable communities escape cycles of crisis—and the New Deal framework share the goals of improving livelihoods, generating employment, fostering inclusive

growth and conflict management. Importantly, good governance is at the center of both comprehensive approaches.

Conclusion

For Somalia to break free of recurrent violence, stabilization activities must be supported by political actors, civil society members, and a Somali population committed to a comprehensive peace-building process that ensures widespread participation but also emphasizes reconciliation over narrow interests. Ultimately, the primary architects of what peace, democracy, and development efforts look like must be the Somali people. Somalia would not have the kind of opportunity it has today were it not for the many members of the Somali community who make a daily decision to focus on a future built on hope and peace rather than on conflict and despair. And the United States remains a committed partner.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.