

1 June 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Istanbul Conference on Somalia**

Your Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey,
Your Excellency Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, President of the Somali Republic,
You Excellency Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank the Government of Turkey for holding the second Istanbul Conference on Somalia, focused on “Preparing Somalia’s Future: Goals for 2015”.

Let me take this opportunity to commend the personal dedication of Prime Minister Erdoğan to the future of Somalia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We come together for the second Istanbul Conference, to map concrete actions in the political, security and economic spheres.

Actions that will enable a smooth end to the transition, and help to establish an inclusive and broad-based political framework in Somalia.

In December last year, Secretary-General Ban and I undertook the first-ever joint official visit to Somalia by a Secretary-General and a President of the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General and I felt that it was very important to visit the country, to reaffirm that the United Nations stands with Somalis at this critical moment.

Following this visit, I also took the initiative to focus the attention of the General Assembly on this urgent issue.

Today, I am joining you at this second conference on Somalia, again together with the Secretary-General, to show the continued support of the United Nations.

Leadership of the Somali authorities is key to intensify efforts to promote full national reconciliation.

I encouraged them to abide by their commitment of the London Somali Conference, to complete the transitional tasks by the end of the extended Transitional period, on the 20th of August, 2012.

While the international community stands ready to offer assistance and investment, the success of the roadmap is ultimately up to Somalis.

It is essential to set up a Constituent Assembly that is inclusive and transparent.

Somalia's new interim Constitution should reflect the aspirations and expectations of the Somali people, as well as the fundamental principles of human rights.

The African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) has made steady progress, and the deployment beyond Mogadishu was critical and a very positive step.

In implementation of Resolution 2036 (2012) adopted by the Security Council last February, AMISOM capacities will be reinforced.

However, more support is necessary to finance AMISOM stipends.

I encourage Member States to support the force's immediate requirements.

I would also encourage all donors to contribute to the unfunded balance of the Mogadishu Stabilization and Recovery Plan.

I would also acknowledge that the relocation of the UN Political Office for Somalia to Mogadishu, after an absence of 17 years, is a very positive development.

But let me be clear.

It is less than three months until the end of the transition period.

We still face many challenges.

There are continued, widespread grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, especially against the most vulnerable.

Here, I cannot help but mentioning the crisis of piracy, which is addressed by the General Assembly.

I would also note that targeting, obstructing or preventing the delivery of humanitarian aid, and any attack on humanitarian personnel, is unacceptable.

The humanitarian situation asks for continued attention.

Although we see signs of improvement, this improvement can only be sustained by continuing the current level of assistance.

I would also take this opportunity to reiterate that the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel – civilian and uniformed – must be a top priority for all involved.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This Second Istanbul Conference offers a unique opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to Somalia.

I am confident that the Somali authorities will continue their leadership, in promoting full national reconciliation and bringing the transitional period to a successful conclusion.

Let us all join our efforts to achieve peace for Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

Thank you.