



STATEMENT OF H.E. DR JEAN PING,
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AU COMMISSION,
ON THE OPENING OF THE MINI SUMMIT ON SOMALIA,
31 JANUARY 2011, ADDIS ABABA.

Your Excellency Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Chair of IGAD,

Your Excellencies the Heads of State and Government,

Your Excellency President Teodoro Obiang, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and Chair of the African Union,

Your Excellency President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Republic of Mauritania and Chair of the AU Peace and Security Council for the month of January 2011,

Your Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations,

Your Excellencies the Representatives of the Permanent Members of the Security Council and of the European Union,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to, once again, welcome you to Addis Ababa, the political capital of our continent. I also wish to thank you at the outset for having set aside this time in your very tight schedules to participate in this High-Level meeting on Somalia. Words cannot capture this devotion and message to the Somali people and the world at large your burning desire and will to bring lasting peace and development to Somalia.

Excellencies, we are meeting now to deliberate on the way forward on the situation in Somalia, a country we all know is ravaged by contestations for power, land and resources. Unfortunately the contestation has spawned extreme violence and extremism whose main victims are women and children. The humanitarian crisis prevailing in Somalia could never be adequately expressed in numbers as the statistics are just cold numbers. We have to think in terms of the trauma suffered by the victims and how it is being inflicted on a daily basis.

This crisis in Somalia is unraveling against the backdrop of our presence, through AMISOM, the United Nations, partner and humanitarian agencies doing all we can to assist the internationally recognized Transitional Federal Government (TFG) mitigate the suffering of its people as well as stabilize the country towards security, peace and legitimacy through an inclusive democratic process. So the TFG's challenge has been to implement the transitional tasks outlined in the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC). I need not repeat them here, suffice to note, with disappointment, that no significant progress has been made and to state, with resolve, that much needs and will be achieved in the next few months.

Excellencies,

Besides the signing of the Framework of Cooperation Agreement with Al Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ), there have been very limited results in political dialogue between the TFG and armed groups still outside the peace process, with traditional regional and local Authorities across the country, some of whom could be inclined towards peace. As a result, the TFG has also been unable to establish national authority. It has not been able to effectively deliver on its governmental obligations, especially the provision of stability and delivery of social services, to its constituency.

This non-performance, if you may, has impacted negatively on perceptions of its legitimacy and credibility, both domestically and internationally. Yet that as it may be, the AU and the United Nations must continue to lend political and diplomatic support to the recognized governmental institutions of Somalia, particularly at this juncture when in seven months time the mandate of the TFI's will come to an end.

The rationale for this meeting, Excellencies, is therefore to explore ways and means by which we can assist, more speedily and effectively, the TFG complete its transitional tasks as defined by the TFC in order to legitimate the outcome of the transition process. The instruments for facilitating this political process are in place. First, the elected representatives of the Somali people in the Federal Parliament must help the government of Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed to function and deliver on its transitional tasks without being destabilized on trivial matters. Secondly, UN Council Resolution 1964 (2010) backs the enhancing of AMISOM's troop strength to 12,000, it should be able to discharge its mandate to expectation. Thirdly, the international community and other partners are ready to assist, their presence here is eloquent testimony.

My final word relating to the TFI's, Excellencies, is to strongly urge them to resist any temptations to taking unilateral decisions regarding the management of this transitional process. Decisions based on broad-based consultations are not only legitimate, but also implementable. Our meeting today bears testimony to our strong commitment to continue to work together, in a coordinated manner, in support of the Somali people this particular year and beyond.

I thank you.