



AFRICAN UNION MISSION IN SOMALIA (AMISOM) MEETING WITH THE SOMALI DIASPORA IN NORTH AMERICA: 5-6 OCTOBER, 2013; MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, USA.

COMMUNIQUE

On October 5-6, 2013, a consultation forum was held between representatives of the Somali Diaspora communities in North America and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. Participants included elders, intellectuals, religious scholars, women, youth, experts in various fields and professionals from academia, governmental organizations and civil society. Ambassador Mahamat Saleh Annadif, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Head of AMISOM was in attendance with a team of civilian, police and military personnel from AMISOM and the African Union Commission. Mr. Ali Amer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation represented the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS).

Coming at a time when Somalis in the Diaspora are returning to Somalia in record numbers due to improved security in much of the country, the aim of the conference was to serve as a forum for idea generation and to promote the participation of the Somali Diaspora in their country's peace and reconstruction process. The conference provided a unique opportunity for Somalis in the Diaspora to receive a first-hand account of the African Union's intervention in Somalia, including the mandate and activities of the civilian, police and military components of AMISOM since its deployment in 2007.

Following focused group discussions on how the Somali Diaspora can contribute to "Women and Youth Unemployment", "National Reconciliation" and "Institutional Building" in Somalia, the participants adopted recommendations for the consideration by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), AMISOM, as well as all relevant actors and partners of Somalia.

On Women and Youth Unemployment, the participants recommend that,

1. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) should put in place a national women and youth employment strategy that is inclusive to all regions and women in internally displaced camps.
2. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and relevant partners as well as local actors and the Somali Diaspora should undertake appropriate vocational trainings for Somali women and youths in order to create blue-collar jobs.
3. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and relevant partners as well as local actors and the Somali Diaspora should provide targeted micro financing to facilitate the creation of small-scale businesses by the women and youths.
4. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) with the support of AMISOM and in consultation with the Somali Diaspora should convene a stakeholder's roundtable to support the implementation of the anticipated Government national strategy on women and youth employment.
5. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) should encourage and facilitate the recruitment, in an inclusive manner, of more eligible women and youths in the Somalia National Security Forces.
6. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and AMISOM in partnership with the Somali Diaspora should redirect and rehabilitate youths disengaging from Al-Shabaab through appropriate employment and educational opportunities.

On National Reconciliation, the participants recommend that,

1. That national reconciliation efforts should be refocused on Somali justice and reconciliation models.
2. In order to enhance trust and promote national reconciliation, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) should deal with impunity through an appropriate justice and reconciliation process.
3. The Diaspora should promote the use of existing Somali media (radio, television and internet) as well as Somali oral tradition (poetry, music) to promote reconciliation.
4. The Diaspora should support ongoing peace and reconciliation efforts by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), AMISOM, the United Nations (UN) and other stakeholders.
5. The Diaspora should convene an annual day of atonement to reconciliation as well as promoting "Islam for Peace" including support for the invoking of fatwas by religious clerics and the naming and shaming of anti-peace elements.
6. AMISOM should expand its deployment as a means to facilitating and creating the necessary environment for local and national reconciliation activities/efforts to be undertaken by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) across the country.
7. The Federal Government of Somalia should establish a Property Restitution Commission to return properties to its original owners.
8. The Federal Government of Somalia should guarantee the freedom to life and to move back to their places of origin for internally displaced women and children.

On Institutional Building, the participants recommend that,

1. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) needs to develop a human resources capability that is built on a transparent, fair and merit-based recruitment process.
2. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) should establish an independent public service institution with a defined tenure of service that transcends the lifespan of any given administration.
3. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) should strengthen the public revenue and accountability institutions and processes including through transparent budgeting and the establishment of an independent anti-corruption body.
4. The Federal Government of Somalia with the support of AMISOM and other partners should enhance the capacity of the Somali National Army, Somali Police Force, in preparation for the exit of AMISOM.
5. The Somali Diaspora, in committing to institutional development in Somalia, should engage education institutions, government entities and other international focused organizations to contribute to capacity building efforts in Somalia.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations of the conference, the participants constituted a Follow- up Committee to liaise with AMISOM in this regard as well as to facilitate the convening of an annual Somali diaspora conference which should be held on a rotational basis in places with a large number of Somali communities across the world.

The conference participants thanked the African Union for its critical and pivotal contribution to the peace and security of Somalia, especially through AMISOM. The participants also expressed their appreciation to the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for facilitating the convening of this consultative forum and the Minnesota Somali community for their hospitality.