



THE MINISTER

At London Conference on Somalia, President of Somaliland calls on the international community to recognize his country

London, 23 February 2012 -- The **President of Somaliland, Ahmed Mohamed Mohamud Silanyo**, today attended the **London Conference on Somalia**. The Conference included political leaders from over 50 countries and international organizations, including **US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton** and **UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**.

In his statement to the Conference, the President said that peace and stability in Somalia **“will not be achieved by the top-down imposition of a re-created centralized state,”** noting the tendency of the international community to focus on approaches that over-emphasize the role of central government institutions in Mogadishu. He instead laid out his views on a **bottom-up process to building peace and stability in Somalia**, drawing lessons from what worked successfully in Somaliland in the early 1990s.

President Silanyo said that he also firmly believed **“that supporting and recognizing Somaliland would help to promote stability and recovery in Somalia.”** He referred to Somaliland’s own experience of building **“peace through an indigenous bottom-up process, drawing on traditional conflict resolution methods and Islam.”**

Somaliland rejects the view that Somalia should be reconstituted within the boundaries that existed up to 1991. In his statement, the President said that **“[t]he people of Somaliland chose the path of independence more than 20 years ago and we cannot turn back. To do so would be to deny our recent history, our achievements, and our political reality.”** He added that **“[a]s a democratically elected government, we must respect our people’s wishes.”** The President also called for **“an inclusive international discussion about the future of Somaliland, launching a process leading to the recognition of our state.”**

Somaliland is a former British protectorate. It declared independence from Somalia in 1991 and has since enjoyed relative stability. It has held a series of democratic elections which have been deemed free and fair by international observers. Despite its impressive achievements, Somaliland has not been recognized internationally.

For further information or to request an interview with President Silanyo, please contact Paul Whiteway at +44-20-7489-2118.