British Office for Somalia

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Dear Colleagues,

LONDON CONFERENCE: EMERGING THOUGHTS

The UK believes there is an opportunity right now to tackle the causes of instability in Somalia. We need an international approach focused on actions which support and build on the progress being made on the ground.

For these reasons, we have invited key international partners to a Conference in London on 23 February, hosted by the British Prime Minister. It will discuss how the international community might support progress towards peace and stability in Somalia more effectively, under the leadership of both our African partners and the UN.

Since announcing the Conference, we have held a number of consultations. The emerging messages and some initial conclusions are attached. I also attach a selection of short non-papers which offer some ideas on a range of issues. This is an ambitious agenda. A number of colleagues have suggested the idea of partnerships between two or three of us to drive progress in particular areas, perhaps reporting to the London Conference, but sustaining a leadership role beyond it. I would welcome further ideas or suggestions on this.

In order to discuss these ideas and listen to any reactions or questions you might have about the Conference or these emerging conclusions, I cordially invite you or your representative to a meeting on **Tuesday 10 January 2012 at 1030 at the Serena Hotel.** We would welcome your ideas and thoughts.

Do please let my colleague, Julie Palmer (Julie.Palmer@fco.gov.uk; 020 2844258) know if you or a representative will be able to participate. I look forward to seeing you on 10th January.

In the meantime, my best wishes for the festive season and the New Year.

Matt Baugh
UK Senior Representative for Somalia

LONDON CONFERENCE: MAIN MESSAGES AND INITIAL CONCLUSIONS

1.   Political Process.

Key messages include:

- It is clear that August 2012 is a key deadline.

- Other parties in Somalia need to be brought into the political process more effectively, to allow for more representative government. The

- Transitional Federal Institutions could be succeeded by some form of Constituent Assembly and Interim Authority.

- Some feel strongly that there needs to be a decisive shift towards supporting some of the regional administrations like Puntland and Galmudug, building on the relative success of Somaliland.   Others are equally clear that support for central organs of state remains a key principle.

- All wanted better coordination between international partners on assistance; some suggested a Joint Financial Management Board.

 So, some initial conclusions are:

- We should be clear in London that current arrangements come to an end in August;

- That successor arrangements should be more representative and accountable to the Somali people;

- There should be greater transparency of government receipts and expenditure, and between donors/partners;

- That we should aim to coordinate packages of developmental and other support to authorities beyond Mogadishu as part of widening the national political process (more detail on this below);

- And build towards proper national elections in the not-too-distant future.

2.   Security

Key messages include:

- The security situation is changing fast. AMISOM in Mogadishu has made significant steps forward; but its funding remains ad hoc and should be put on a more sustainable footing.

- Though Al Shabaab seems on the back foot, it is now moving into a strategy of asymmetric attacks;

- The advances by Kenyan forces to Afmadow were a significant new action, and some are strongly supportive. Many also noted the increasing coherence between Kenyan, Ethiopian, Ugandan and AU military and political strategies, and looked forward to probable UN Security Council discussion in the New Year.

- Many are more cautious about the likelihood of decisive military success; and others wanted greater clarity on the legal position.

Some initial conclusions here are:

- We should try, probably before London, to come to a view on how to put AMISOM onto a more sustainable footing;

- We should look at ways at least some of us can support Kenyan actions, including by stabilisation support to those areas which transfer away from Al Shabaab authority.

- But there are many actors involved; a good outcome from the London Conference would be increased co-ordination of military efforts in Somalia, supported by sustainable funding packages which match our ambition, and a commitment to the long-term development of Somali security forces.

3.   Al Shabaab

Key messages include:

- There are diverging views on Al Shabaab, though we detect a common view that there is always going to be a place in Somali politics for those who hold Islamist views, provided they are willing to be non-violent and live in peace with others who hold different views.

- Even those partners who do not wish to deal with Al Shabaab agree that it is important to offer Al Shabaab followers the opportunity to join mainstream politics.

Some initial conclusions are:

- We should try to find a formulation to indicate that an inclusive Somali political process includes space for political Islam;

- We should agree on a common narrative to counter violent extremism in Somalia.

4.   Terrorism

Key messages include:

- Our differing views on Al Shabaab are mirrored by differing views on how to tackle terrorism. There are softer and harder-edged versions of this.

- But many agree that greater security and political progress would further undermine terrorism.

- Many feel that we could make some progress in action against terrorist financing.

- Several mentioned the case for an international justice programme in Somalia which would provide a legal structure for the arrest, trial and imprisonment of those found guilty of terrorist acts.

- There has been some suggestion that AMISOM might itself be given a mandate, training and enablers to undertake counter-terrorist operations.

Some initial conclusions:

- The overall message of the London conference should be that we can only tackle terrorist threats through a mixture of political and security progress.

- We should indicate our joint determination to tackle both terrorism and the causes of terrorism and agree stronger international action on terrorist financing;

- And we try to agree some form of Justice Programme to support the development of justice programmes in Somalia and its regions.

5. Piracy

Key messages include:

- Piracy is a symptom of an economic and security crisis, and that it will not be dealt with in isolation.

- Though the media coverage suggests rampant piracy action, in reality more is being achieved than is recognised. Together, our vessels at sea in the Gulf of Aden mean that there are now virtually no piracy incidents there; some would consider taking action from those assets against pirate infrastructure on land.

- Those of us able to place armed guards on our vessels have found that there have been no subsequent successful boardings of vessels.

- A number of countries, especially the Seychelles, have found ways to accept pirates captured by naval forces and try them; and a number of regions of Somalia are now agreeing to imprison those found guilty.

- There are a number of planned events, which could provide very useful opportunities for further discussion, including the planned Kenya Piracy Summit in Nairobi in the New Year and the United Arab Emirates' piracy summit in Abu Dhabi in June.

- And the International Contact Group on Piracy is undertaking a range of work, including on addressing financial flows.

Some initial conclusions are:

- We should work closely with our Kenyan and Emirates colleagues on their meetings, and with those leading the work of the International Contact Group on Piracy and its various Working Groups;

- We should aim to bring to wider attention the good work already being done on interdiction, trial and imprisonment, including specific examples of work we are doing collectively or in smaller group;

- We need to match our work at sea with engagement with the authorities on land, especially regional Somali authorities.

6.   Humanitarian

Key messages:

- The situation could well get worse.

- Many in the region are concerned at the cross-border impacts, particularly the large numbers of refugees.

- There is a general desire for better coordination between donors.

- Drought has turned to famine in South Somalia because of conflict, and that preventing future famines will require increasing stability across the south, to enable more investments in poor people's ability to cope with future droughts. The famine is worst in those areas run by Al Shabaab, which undermined their claim to best support people in those areas.

- The UN has the formal lead on coordination, which many have noted, but the OIC is also playing a significant role.

- Turkey and the UN plan a conference in Istanbul later in 2012 which among other issues will look at humanitarian need and better coordination, as well as recovery and reconstruction.

- OCHA launched the UN's annual appeal on 13 December for $4 billion, to help 4 million people - including 250,000 still suffering famine conditions.

Some initial conclusions are:

- We should work very closely with our Turkish and UN colleagues to ensure London feeds helpfully into Istanbul, including in responding to the OCHA appeal;

- We should aim for language in London which recognises that drought has turned to famine in South Somalia because of conflict;

- We should try to come up with a balanced approach to refugee support which reflects the concerns of the region and our legal commitments under the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees;

- We should explore what sort of commitments we can make to providing more livelihoods support, as well as emergency aid, in the worst affected areas;

- And we should look for communiqué language which endorses humanitarian principles based on need and UN leadership on coordination.

7.   Local stability

Key messages include;

- Many of us are already providing some support at a sub-national level in Somalia, though there is no agreement between us on who will concentrate where.

- Many of the sub-national regions would like better coordination architecture.

- A multi-donor fund to support local stability could be an efficient way to channel resources and improve coordination.

- It would be useful to have a common set of principles for support.

Some initial conclusions are that in London we should aim at:

- Agreement on an international approach to promoting stability at the sub-national level; a common set of principles for support; and perhaps some agreement on how best to divide our efforts geographically;

- And perhaps a multi-donor Local Stability Fund with associated coordination architecture.

8. International coordination

Key messages include:

- Widespread support for the decision to hold the London Conference

- We should improve international coordination on Somalia policy.

- The International Contact Group, though a valuable occasion to meet those most involved in Somalia, has not found ways to either provide the decision-making leadership we need or capture the range of work we all do on Somali issues.

- We spend too much time in Nairobi and around the world, and not enough inside Somalia.

- We all welcome the announcement that UNPOS will move to Mogadishu.