



THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

425 E 61ST STREET, # 702, NEW YORK, NY 10065
Tel (212) 688-9410, Fax (212) 759-0651

REMARKS BY

H.E. MR. OMAR A. A. SHARMARKE

PRIME MINISTER OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

AT

THE 70TH SESSION OF

THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF

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Mr. President

Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations

Honorable Delegates,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first congratulate Mr. Lykketoft on your election as the President of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly.

I will also like to extend our appreciation to the outgoing President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly, Mr. Sam Kutesa for his stewardship this past year.

It is an honor and a privilege to address this august gathering today.

On behalf of the people and government of the Federal Republic of Somalia, I extend a warm congratulations on the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations.

For Seven decades, the United Nations' principled goals of furthering Peace, protecting security and ensuring the advancement of Human Rights have indeed become unifying pillars of our global community.

Somalia was one of the earliest African members of the United Nations, and has been a member more than fifty-five (55) years. We have watched the United Nations growth, we've matured under its tutelage and have now climbed back from a difficult phase in our recent history thankful for the support and backing from the members of this organization.

Twenty-five (25) years ago, Somalia experienced its own "Arab Spring" prior the current phenomenon that has swept through much of the Arab world in the last few years.

We have seen what can happen if the political demands of society aren't adequately addressed. And we have learned from those lessons much too clearly through two challenging decades.

That is why it pains us dearly to see fellow Arab and Muslim countries go through a very similar road. But it must be mentioned that through perseverance and togetherness, Somalia is an example of what can be accomplished in such times.

We are a nation that intimately understands those famous words by the American President John F. Kennedy that "Mankind must put an end to war before war puts an end to mankind".

This year's theme of Peace, Security and Human Rights is in line with the vision of my government. Indeed a New Somalia is taking shape and we intend to continue our climb from the dark.

Mr. President, Honourable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I want to tell you about Somalia. But a different Somalia from the one you might have heard of.

I am not here to challenge you on our notoriety as a result of a conflict that has spanned two and half decades. However, please allow me to introduce another reality.

Somalia is home to a proud and industrious people. Despite adversity, we have become world-leading sportsmen, economists, authors, poets, musicians, entrepreneurs and innovators.

Even without a government, our businesses kept functioning. We remain a major player in the regional livestock trade and have one of the most innovative telecoms sectors in Africa. My people are ambitious. And generous; during the famine, we gave more than all aid agencies combined.

We have built banking systems based on social capital and trust; invaluable networks that have attracted a range of investors. We are survivors and, given the chance, we can drive forward the socioeconomic landscape of East Africa. Imagine the potential: we have one of the longest shorelines in the world which hosts untapped oil and gas reserves.

We are actively rebuilding our country to realise this potential. We must be humble; progress is slow, but look at where we have come from; the civil war destroyed our infrastructure, institutions, and took away some of our brightest minds. But now they are coming back and, together, we are moving forward. We have defeated piracy, are embracing decentralization and, most importantly, we are learning lessons from our past.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

You have been together with us during this remarkable journey. And we thank you. My Government has a vision: to rebuild state institutions. Considerable progress has been made towards Vision 2016: three new interim regional states have already been formed, we are consulting our people on how best to hold a free, democratic election and we have established constitutionally mandated commissions to ensure accountability.

Allow me to elaborate on a few critical issues.

First, we must ensure a free and fair election. For this to be successful, we must agree - with our constituents - on a fair and transparent voting system and how that can be cascaded to each region. Only through inclusion will we draw public support. Let me remind you that Somalia was Africa's first country where a democratically elected president lost an election and gracefully transferred power. This history must define our future.

We must also prioritise our national security forces. There is still an active insurgency, which we are risking our lives to dismantle – for our own safety, and for the security of our neighbours. Last year – together with African Union forces - we liberated all major regions from Al-Shabaab. But our soldiers are underpaid, underfed and under-equipped, and yet they are expected to put their lives on the line for their country. This is unacceptable. We must invest in professionalizing our security and police forces. Peacekeeping missions work best when there are clear objectives and timelines to both restore stability and build the capacity of national security forces.

I would like you to join me in paying tribute to all those who have helped liberate us from violence. Many of whom have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Our women – mothers, daughters, sisters – also deserve limitless praise for enduring the worst of our brutal conflict. The survival instinct of the Somali people is most evident in women: raising families whilst their homes are being bombed, walking miles without water in search of safety and burying their children whilst continuing to work to feed the rest of their family. We know what war can do. And that is why I will ensure – as a father and a husband – that we will defeat terrorism. It is our duty, as a Government.

Another issue of high importance is Somali refugees and undocumented migrants still living in temporary camps, some for more than two and a half decades. We thank countries in the region for helping and hosting our people, but recognize that many continue to live in perpetual crisis, without any hope of resettlement, residency or

citizenship. This is unacceptable. We urge our friends in this Assembly to work with us in finding durable solutions. This transition will not be easy, but millions of lives depend on it.

Ultimately, we must enable the rebuilding of state institutions and infrastructure. Effective and transparent state institutions are a prerequisite for providing services. Public services that many people around the world take for granted, Somalia lacks completely, or has in very short supply.

For the past two and half decades, public services including public schools, water and power have shifted and are run by private companies.

It is critical that all Somalis feel they have a stake and a real role in government. Residents of Somalia have the right to demand services from us. If we fail to provide such services, we risk falling short of our expectations.

I stand here today to propose a “Grand Development Plan” for Somalia. This new “plan” will focus on rebuilding social and physical infrastructure: roads, schools, hospitals, community centers, ports, airports, and markets; all of which are essential for reviving the State and the economy. The plan, aligned to the new Sustainable Development Goals, will ensure a reduction in duplication of effort and empower Somalis to keep building their own future.

The bulk of our population is under the age of 30. They are the future of our nation. It is from them that we are borrowing today’s resources and for them that peace will pay its ultimate dividend. We must find a place for them in leadership; and we must create jobs and opportunities for them. They need the kind of opportunities and challenges that drive all young people around the world to succeed. We need to provide incentives for them to have a choice and move away from extremism. This Grand Development Plan

for Somalia, akin to a Somali “*Marshal Plan*” will create countless opportunities for our youth to invest in their own future.

Billions of taxpayer money has been pumped into Somalia and we have had some successes – but not enough. NGOs have become a local business; some are effective, others not. We now need a different approach: we don’t want charity; we want direct investment. We need to build quality schools, fill them with quality educators, pave roads, build markets, and rejuvenate agricultural production to make us, once again, East Africa’s largest exporter of quality produce. The New Deal is a useful ‘aid framework’, but we need to translate this into results. And it’s about time.

Grand Development Plan for Somalia will ensure accountability and transparency for every investment made. Each UN Member State will have the opportunity to evolve Somalia into an economic powerhouse and future trading partner. The “plan” will be shared with all of you in due course.

Mr. President, Honourable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

We are grateful to you for supporting us over the last two and half decades. Thank you for welcoming our people as your own; for turning a relatively small nomadic tribe from the Horn of Africa into a global workforce. And for the amount of time and resources that has been invested – we are humbled by your generosity. We will make your efforts work for our people. But we also need your continued support.

Only four years ago, radical insurgents controlled our country. They oppressed and threatened the lives of our people. But today, children are returning to Mogadishu beaches, women sit on dunes selling home-baked bananas and the sound of bullets has been replaced by the noise of construction.

Look how far we have come. And imagine what we can do in another four years.

We are looking forward to not only bounce back for our benefit, but to also become that shining example to nations that are now in the throws of hardship, nations that are working hard to move from third world to first, and to nations that find it hard to navigate the difficult but worthwhile road of recovery.

We are ready to play our part, so that we may give back and contribute toward their success and the fulfillment of their rightful destiny and to take our place among the contributing nations of our Global village

Mr. President, Honourable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Somalia has failed my generation. And I will dedicate my life to ensuring it does not fail the next. But I cannot do this alone. Only together, can we be the Somalia the world is waiting for.

Thank you.