

Madame President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madame, for presiding over the Security Council this month and wish you all success. I thank African Union's Special Representative to Somalia and UN Special Representative of the Secretary General to Somalia for their briefings.

My delegation takes note of the SG report S/2024/129 and would like to make the following points:

First, we welcome the fact that the current report refers to some challenges and acknowledges the positive steps taken by the Federal Government of Somalia. However, we respectfully suggest in the interest of maximizing its usefulness, the report should be redesigned to contain less narrative, less details about minor events, and more in-depth analysis of major issues as well as recommendations and conclusions.

Second, Operative Paragraph 13 of UNSC resolution 2705 (2023) has called for the development of a road map for the eventual transition from Special Political Mission to the United Nations Country Team as well as the finalization of the UNSOM staffing and configuration review. In that regard, we note that the undertaking of these tasks was not the current report. The urgent planning for transition to UNCT is critical since it will assist UNSOM in aligning with the Government's articulated long term development priorities. We request SG to include in the transition's road map and the finalization of the staffing and configuration review in the next reporting period.

Madame President

As you are aware, on January 1, 2024, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia made the announcement to annex part of Somalia in order to establish a military base and the decision to subsequently recognize the "independence" of the separatist group in the northwestern region of Somalia. This constitutes a clear violation and a breach of Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity -the fundamental principles, enshrined in the Article 2 of the UN Charter.

Somali Government condemns and rejects Ethiopia's illegal actions and deceptive endeavors to disguise its failed annexation attempt of a Somali territory as a promotion of economic cooperation and integration. Somali Government warns that such actions not only adversely impact regional's stability but also constitutes a dangerous precedent to the international system of sovereign, free and independent states for all countries and erodes the credibility of the rules-based system

We have witnessed throughout history how annexation has been a catalyst for regional tensions and protracted conflicts, with devastating humanitarian consequences. Ethiopia's establishment of military base in Somalia amounts to a declaration of war against Somalia and its people. Moreover, these actions have revived the violent extremist group Al-Shabaab and can reverse our hard-earned gains in Somalia in the last three decades.

By unilaterally altering borders and territorial integrity of Somalia, Ethiopian Government is fueling a cycle of distrust and hostility between the Somali and Ethiopian people. Furthermore, the effect of such action can have serious destabilizing effect given the complex ethnic makeup of the countries in the Horn. Consequently, such actions will certainly inspire the rise of ethnic separatist groups in the Horn, particularly in countries where there are constitutional provisions for path to secession, namely Ethiopia.

In addition to the immediate regional ramifications, the ripple effects of Ethiopia's actions can extend far beyond our borders of Somalia and Ethiopia. These actions can weaken the region, disrupt global trade and commerce, and potentially create an influx of refugees that strain the resources and capacities of neighboring countries. The reverberations of such violations will be felt across the international community, and they have the potential to undermine the stability and security of the world.

Madame President,

The African Union plays a role in preserving the borders of all African countries and prevent conflicts that could potentially threaten the stability and sovereignty of African nations. We have brought the violations to the attention of African Union's Peace and Security (AUPSC), but Ethiopia's Government did not attend the meeting called by the Council to discuss the matter. Furthermore, In the African Union Summit on Saturday, Ethiopian Government kept President HSM in his hotel and tried to prevent him from entering the AU HQ to deliver his remarks.

In light of these developments, it is clear that Ethiopia is willfully obstructing the path to bilateral cooperation and raising a dangerous precedent about its host country's commitment to the principles of the African Union and international diplomacy. It appears that our African Union's image has been seriously tarnished by such actions as it is being held hostage to a host Government led by a Nobel Peace prize laureate who has become an international law habitual violator.

Ultimately, the credibility of the United Nations and African Union, and the stability of Somalia are deeply intertwined, and the aforementioned violations poses a direct threat to all. We express our view that African Union should have been more proactively vocal about what is clear intent of blatant aggression against the unity and territorial integrity of Somalia by Ethiopia. Given the gravity of the situation and its serious regional and international repercussions, it is incumbent upon the United Nations and African Union to ensure that they remain true to their mission of conflict prevention and the maintenance of international peace and security.

In conclusion,

We thank United Nations and African Union for their unwavering commitment and support for preserving Somalia's sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, and independence. It is imperative that Ethiopia abandons its expansionist ambitious in Somalia, and strictly adhere to the fundamental norms of good neighborliness and principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, and African Union.

President HSM has stated in many instances that we are committed to “*Somalia that is at peace with the world*”, which includes our neighboring countries. While Somali Government affirms its keenness to exercise the highest levels of self-restraint, it reserves its full inherent right of self-defense to respond the threats stemming from violations to its territorial integrity and unity in accordance with provisions of international law.