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**Statement by the AU Special Representative for Somalia, Ambassador Nicolas Bwakira,  
at the opening session of the Technical/Experts and Ambassadorial Meeting on Capacity  
Building Support to the Somalia Transitional Federal Government**

**14-15 July 2009**

**Laico Regency, Nairobi**

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**Your Excellencies,**

**Ambassadors,**

**Representatives of Governments and International Organizations**

**Experts and Resource Persons**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- 1.** I am highly honoured and delighted to address the opening session of this very important gathering. The impressive turnout that I see here today, and the diverse array of envoys and experts represented at this consultative forum, is in itself a clear demonstration of the seriousness that we all attach to the objectives of this workshop.
- 2.** On behalf of the African Union, I would first of all like to use this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to all countries, institutions and individuals who are participating in this meeting. I must also commend colleagues from AMISOM, IGAD and UNPOS for the time and energy they put into organizing this event.
- 3.** As you are aware, part of AMISOM mandate is to facilitate capacity building. The thrust of this role is for AMISOM to guide the process, while working in close collaboration with other international partners, to ensure that there is proper coordination of capacity building assistance to the TFG.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**4.** Over the next two days of this forum, we shall undertake the crucial task of deliberating on the priority capacity building needs of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. And in so doing, we hope to identify practical and innovative ways of addressing those pressing needs of the TFG.

**5.** The challenges at hand are enormous, and to tackle them successfully would require our firm commitment and continued partnership with the Government and people of Somalia. It is also vital that we approach this task in full consideration of the priorities identified by the TFG itself.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**6.** I probably need not remind you that Somalia has undergone more than 20 years of violent conflict that completely destroyed its state institutions. For the past two decades, a climate of instability has prevailed in the country. The security sector has been in shambles and the absence of the rule of law has remained a norm.

**7.** It is this unfortunate trend of events that the AU, IGAD, UN and all other partners of Somalia are trying to reverse through our common support to the Djibouti Peace Process. The undeniable fact, however, is that despite our significant achievements in the peace process, there is still a long way to go in re-establishing functional institutions of state in Somalia. This is exactly why we must continue to support the Transitional Government by assisting the Government build its capacity in vital areas of need.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**8.** You will recall that, on 6 June 2009, we convened a consultative meeting, in Nairobi, of AU Member States that have pledged training and service support to the TFG.

**9.** The need for such a meeting arose from the communiqués of the IGAD extra ordinary Council of Ministers meeting of 20 May 2009, the AU Peace and Security Council meeting of 22 May 2009, and several resolutions of the United Nations Security Council including resolution 1872 (2009), all of which called for a more concerted and coordinated efforts by the international community in addressing the situation in Somalia.

**10.** In their final communiqué, the participants representing sixteen (16) AU Member Countries highlighted the need for coordination of all ongoing and future training support and other services pledged by AU Member States to the TFG in order to avoid duplication and wastage of the scarce resources. They also encouraged the AU and other

partners to re-energize their resolve to support the TFG by initiating or reactivating their bi-lateral co-operations with the Government. Furthermore, they called upon bilateral and multilateral institutions and governmental institutions to contribute the requisite expertise and resources to support capacity building of the TFG in key areas, with specific focus on the security sector.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**11.** Today, we are undertaking the follow-up consultation from the 6 June meeting, in the hope of developing a roadmap for targeted and coordinated capacity building support to the TFG.

**12.** I must emphasize that the deliverables of this meeting are manifold: First, we need to ascertain which partner is doing what and where in terms of capacity building/ training support to the TFG. Also, we have to determine whether we have the necessary funding or expertise to address the identified capacity building priorities, and if not, to reach a clear decision on how to find the needed resources.

**13.** To achieve coordination of capacity building support to the TFG, it is important that we the partners assign responsibilities amongst ourselves to avoid overlapping of activities or inputs by different partner countries or institutions. And that is certainly why this meeting could not have come at a better time.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**14.** Before I go further, I would like to point out here that this initiative is not about undertaking the long-term post war-reconstruction and development support to Somalia. On the contrary, what we seek to undertake here is a stop-gap capacity building initiative to help the TFG get on its feet. This represents a starting point to rebuilding the institutions of state.

**15.** It is about making key institutions of the security sector functional, such as the paramilitary and the police. It is also about assisting in resurrecting vital institutions within the public sector to manage the process of restoring stability and running the government --- such as the ministries of defence and national security, the civil service, the revenue generation and budgeting mechanisms, and the office of the Prime Minister.

**16.** Additionally, the humanitarian and human rights dimension need to be addressed, for example, through the provision of human rights training to the Somali paramilitary and police forces. Furthermore, we may have to consider enhancing the communication capacity of the TFG --- an important factor in the Government's effort at restoring stability and promoting reconciliation.

**17.** AMISOM recognizes and is extremely grateful for the significant contribution of all other partners in this concerted effort to help the TFG get on its own feet, and I urge that we continue along this path and enhance our engagement in the days, weeks and months ahead.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**18.** On behalf of the African Union, I call on all participants to approach these important discussions with open minds and contribute to our common quest for long and lasting peace in Somalia.

**19.** I am quite hopeful that the decisions from this 2-day forum will contribute immensely to the strengthening of the TFG capacity and, by extension, help in the restoration of peace and stability to Somalia.

**I thank you very much.**