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STATEMENT BY Dr. JEAN PING,
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION
AT THE MINI-SUMMIT ON SOMALIA,

NEW YORK, 26 SEPTEMBER 2012

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of the Federal Republic of Somalia;

Heads of State and Government;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you, Mr. Secretary General for convening this very important mini-Summit on Somalia. On 16 September I had the singular privilege and honor to attend the inauguration of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in Mogadishu. It was a graceful and moving occasion. The transfer of power from former President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed was as smooth as it was inspiring, unimaginable yesterday but a reality this day.

This is what it should be. This is what the African Union and the international community have all along striven for Somalia. And it has happened. However, we as partners in support of the new dispensation in Somalia must not now sit back as if Somalia had arrived at its final destination. No, its journey has only begun, and we cannot afford to take our eyes off the ball at this point and time of Somalia's most need. This mini summit on Somalia, I'm happy to note, is ample testimony of our commitment to continue, and I would urge, more vigorously, our support to the Government and people of Somalia with practical solutions.

In his statement, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, has struck the right chord in his appreciation and summation of the myriad, complex and daunting challenges that his administration faces in Somalia. He left me with no doubt on his grasp of the issues and priorities he has chosen to tackle. He, indeed, has made our task the lot easier by giving us very clear directions and benchmarks his government is set to embark on. In choosing areas for support we should therefore be guided by the country's order of priorities.

This approach will ensure Somali ownership of its consolidation and development process, facilitate better and effective coordination among us partners, as well as complementarity and synergy between and among the various sectors of government activity.

Meeting these challenges requires greater international support and engagement.

The AU, on its part, will continue, notably through AMISOM, to support the Somali people and leaders in their endeavor. In this respect, particular attention will be given to:

- the expansion and consolidation of AMISOM operations;
- the stabilization activities, including delivery of quick high-impact projects;
- the outreach and engagement with the local populations, to build trust between AMISOM, the local communities and with the new Federal Government;
- the effective empowerment of the Somali National Security Forces, their unification and modernization to make up able to gradually take charge of the national security and public order in Somalia.

To successfully achieve this, it will require that AMISOM's capacities be further strengthened with the support of the United Nations and other actors on the ground.

In conclusion, I will be remiss if I do not recognize the critical role played by the people of Somalia and the former Transitional Federal Government in bringing the transition process to an end. The same is extended to IGAD and the EAC, troop and police contributing countries through AMISOM, the United Nations, the European Union, League of Arab States, the United States, the OIC, Turkey the rest of the international community and other bilateral partners.

To the Federal Government of Somalia, I would like to reiterate AU's commitment to do whatever it can to help the Somali people achieve the peace and reconciliation they have been yearning for over two decades.

I thank you.