



**Press Communiqué  
Geneva, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2011**

The African Group in Geneva met, on 13 September 2011, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, H.E. Mr. Antonio GUTERRES who requested this interaction with the African Group following his recent visit to Somalia and Kenya. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees expressed his concern about the humanitarian situation in Somalia and described the fast-deteriorating living conditions of refugees, IDPs, and the population in general in Somalia. Mr. GUTERRES explained that the draught and famine caused a most critical situation that should be addressed by the international community.

Mr. GUTERRES said he was able to meet the President of Somalia and the Head of AMISOM. He expressed his pleasant surprise at the efforts exerted by AMISOM despite utterly difficult conditions...AMISOM does not have the capacity to perform their mission for lack of equipments and international assistance, nor do they have helicopters, which are critical to their operations. Meanwhile, piracy is still present, unrelenting, and Al Shabab operations are spreading all over Mogadishu.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees further said that he discussed the security conditions in Mogadishu and in the camps with the President of Somalia, which are under the control of the Transitional Federal Government. In this context, Mr. Guterres highlighted the urgent need for international assistance by means of efficient coordination mechanisms between the Government and the various humanitarian actors. The appropriate dispatching of aid, he said, is a key factor in decreasing the scourge of famine in the country, as well as with strengthening AMISOM with arms and equipments, which is crucial.

The High Commissioner called for a strong political support to the process that is currently taking place in the country between local Somali authorities and the international community. He also acknowledged the efforts of neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen. He further highlighted the importance of the recent African Union Pledging conference and expressed his appreciation for the efforts and the commitment of the African Union, the African Development Bank and Concerning his visit to Kenya, the High Commissioner for Refugees mentioned the excellent cooperation with this country and the relevant Kenyan authorities, particularly in terms security partnership programs.

During the debate, the Ambassadors of the African Group expressed their renewed concerns about the situation in Somalia reaffirming that such situation had been prevailing for a long time. The international community, they suggested, should be able to resolve the situation in this country, given the necessary awareness and political will. In this regard, many Ambassadors called upon the High Commissioner for Refugees to use his leverage and mobilise the international community in order to alleviate the plight of the people of Somalia, whether in Somalia or in neighbouring countries. In the same vein, several Ambassadors expressed their appreciation of the efforts and hospitality of host countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen. Finally, the Ambassadors of the African Group unanimously expressed their appreciations to the unwavering efforts of both Mr. GUTERRES and his Institution.