RECENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN SOMALIA

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

- Somalia is at a “turning point” in terms of positive political and security developments as well as the commitment of the international community for a sustainable resolution of the prolonged conflict and protracted crisis in the country. However, the situation remains extremely fragile.

- Somali leaders agreed on a “Roadmap” in September 2011 and, subsequently, on what is coined as the “Garowe Principles” in December 2011.¹ The goal is to broker a viable and legitimate political process up to August, 2012 and beyond. They also discussed a shared strategy for deepening peace and attacking poverty and post-conflict reconstruction.

- The Roadmap aimed at putting in place a process of political transition and bringing to an end the transitional institutions by August 2012. The “Garowe Principles”, agreed at a Constitutional Conference, include in particular provisions on a new Constitution to be drafted, a bicameral Parliament (with 30% of women) to be established with the same current “clan distribution formula” for the first elections, but to be phased out later.

- The challenge is to sustain broad and tedious consensus-building efforts and provide more clarity on the process and key milestones leading up to the end of transitional institutions, including the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), in August 2012 and beyond.

- Plans are underway to hold parliamentary elections on the 20th August, 2012. There are some concerns on the proposed date and the credibility of the results.

- A draft constitution which provides for a federal government has been prepared and agreed for Somalia, with the exception of Somaliland. To enhance ownership and sustainability of the process as well as political and social stability, there is an urgent need to demarcate future electoral boundaries and include adequate representation of all entities.

SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS

- Since 2011, the TFG and a strengthened African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces have been boosted by some successes. They have recovered and taken control of Mogadishu and other areas in central and southern Somalia; creating a real opportunity for stability. To maintain the momentum and further consolidate the gains, on 22nd February, 2012, the UN Security Council agreed to increase the size of AMISOM from 12,000 to 17,730 personnel.

- With a view of establishing effective local administrations, the TFG has engaged local political actors and developed detailed policies in areas it has recently taken control of.

DEVELOPMENTS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

- International initiatives and conferences on Somalia have intensified, culminating recently, amongst others, in the London Conference held on 23rd February 2012, hosted by the UK. The Conference aimed at addressing the causes of instability and its symptoms.

¹ The Somali-led negotiations, facilitated by the UN Political Office on Somalia (UNPOS), included the TFG, Puntland and leaders of the semi-autonomous region of Galmudug. Somaliland has not taken part.
• The international community agreed: (i) to inject new momentum into the political process; (ii) to strengthen AMISOM and help Somalia develop its own security forces; (iii) to help build stability at local level; and, (iv) to step up actions to tackle pirates and terrorists.

• The London Conference welcomed the progress in some areas of Somalia in establishing local areas of stability, and agreed to increase support to build legitimate and peaceful authorities, and improve services to people living in those stable areas. The Conference also broadly endorsed the creation of a Joint Financial Management Board and the Somalia Stability Fund.

• The goal of the Stability Fund is to improve lives for Somalis through reconciliation, local development, and the establishment of legitimate local authority in emerging areas of stability, in accordance with the New Deal for engagement in fragile states recently adopted in Busan.

• The second Istanbul Conference on Somalia, “Preparing Somalia’s Future: Goals for 2015”, jointly organized by Turkey and the United Nations, will be held on 31 May and 1 June 2012. The Conference is expected to take stock of progress in the areas of politics, security and recovery. The Conference also aims at building a broad-based consensus on Somalia after August 2012 and agreeing on a long term approach to State-building and economic development, including an enabling environment for private sector investment in the post-transition period.

RECENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

• The prolonged conflict, the protracted crisis and insecurity in Somalia over the last 30 years have caused enormous damage to the human livelihoods and social indicators.

• During 2011, Somalia has been particularly hit by the drought-induced famine in the Horn of Africa (HOA), considered to be one of the worst humanitarian crises in the last sixty years. Famine was declared in six regions of Somalia where “tens of thousands” of people died as a result of the famine.

• The impacts of the drought in the HOA was exacerbated by the political, institutional and security problems of Somalia, which hinder the efforts of the international community in providing the appropriate response to the humanitarian needs. Addressing effectively the challenges of Somalia is therefore critical to building peace, stability and resilience in the HOA.

• At the peak of the crisis, over 12 million people in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia were in need of urgent food assistance and UNICEF reported that more than 320,000 children were suffering from severe malnutrition.