



PRESS RELEASE:

AU ENVOY FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY ENDS VISIT TO SOMALIA. AND CALLS FOR GREATER SOLIDARITY WITH SOMALI WOMEN

Mogadishu, 27 November 2014; The Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Ms. Bineta Diop, concluded her Somalia visit on Thursday by calling for more solidarity with the people of Somalia, especially the women and children. She underscored the need for increased inclusion, participation and contribution by women to the transformation of Somalia.

Ms. Diop was accompanied by Amb. Anne Mutelo, Namibia's Ambassador to Ethiopia and Julianne Lusenge, President of Female Solidarity for Integrated Peace and Development (SOFEPADI). Ms. Diop conveyed a message of hope, support and encouragement from the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. She also reiterated, the Chairperson's zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA).

Mme. Diop met with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud and First Lady Mama Sahra Hassan. During their discussions Mme Diop encouraged the President to promote the increased participation of women in the leadership and political process. *"This is a defining moment for Somalia, which presents an opportunity for Somali women to be represented and engaged in the ongoing constitutional reform and political processes,"* said Ms. Diop. She noted that whilst the pursuit of lasting peace and security remains a critical goal of AMISOM, the ultimate barometer of success will be the wellbeing of the people of Somalia, particularly the women and children.

President Mohamoud, expressed appreciation to Mme. Diop for her visit and commitment to support women and assured her of his Government's commitment to empower the women of Somalia. He said, *"Women's rights and protection are a key priority in the agenda of the Government of Somalia."*

Speaking to members of the press at the end of her mission, Ms Diop said she had listened to the women of Somalia and was now better equipped to support and advocate for increased financial and technical support to enable them engage constructively in the political process. *"I am appealing to African member states, my African sisters and brothers, the United Nations, partners and the international community to urgently support the Somali women in their efforts to influence and participate in the transformation of Somalia",* she said.

During her four-day visit, she paid a courtesy call to the Ministry of Women and Human Rights and met with government officials led by the Minister of State for Defence. They included the Ministers of Interior and Federalism, Health, Foreign Affairs and Investment Promotion. She also met with women leaders, women entrepreneurs, representatives of

NGOs and traditional as well as religious leaders. She held roundtable talks with members of the Women Peacekeepers Network who shared the various challenges they face while serving in AU Peace Support Operations. She also met with the civilian, military and police components of AMISOM and visited the Sector One headquarters and AMISOM's Level 2 Hospital in Mogadishu.

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