Catherine Ashton travelled to Somalia


As Somalia ends its eight-year transition period, the visit underlines the EU's commitment to contributing to better governance, development and security in the country.

Speaking immediately after her trip to Mogadishu, Catherine Ashton said: "The ending of Somalia's transition will bring with it the prospect of lasting peace, prosperity and stability for the country and for the millions of people who have suffered from 20 years of conflict. It is an occasion the EU warmly welcomes.

It is essential the transition is completed swiftly. The new Federal Parliament must finalise the process as soon as possible, to fulfil the aspirations of all Somalis. The new institutions must then immediately embark on efforts towards stabilisation in all accessible areas in the country. This is crucial to the future of a viable federal Somalia. The people of Somalia must be assured of good governance, transparency, accountability, justice and respect for their rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of worship. Above all, the new Federal Institutions must reach out to Somalis of all walks of life, to achieve reconciliation and development after more than twenty years of conflict.

I urge Somali leaders to act swiftly, decisively with integrity and in the interests of the Somali people. We look forward to the new Government's work plan, and underline the urgent need for a mechanism to guarantee the sound use of financial resources.

I take this opportunity to assure the Somali people of the EU's continued support, including support for the African Union in its mission to create the necessary conditions for the development of Somali security forces, and with EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) engagement through the EU Training Mission (EUTM), Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) and its new capacity building mission (EUCAP Nestor). You are not alone"."
Background

The EU is the biggest donor to Somalia having committed over 1 billion Euros for the period 2008 to 2013 through a comprehensive approach including security support, development assistance and humanitarian aid. Out of it, €500 million have been invested for development aid through the European Development Fund (EDF), in order to support effective governance, rule of law, education and stimulating economic development.

The EU is also strongly supporting the African Union peace building operation to Somalia (AMISOM) with an overall commitment of €329 million since the start of the mission in 2007 through the African Peace Facility (APF).

Three CSDP missions EUTM, EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta, and EUCAP Nestor are part of the EU's engagement to Somalia. The EUCAP Nestor has been launched in July. Its main focus lies on strengthening regional capacity to fight piracy. In particular, in Somalia, EUCAP Nestor will provide strategic and legal advice, police officers training and procure equipment (communications, vehicles, safety equipment) to strengthen the land-based coastal police forces.

For more information please see:

EU relations with Somalia


For audio video coverage please visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs/schedule.cfm