Mr. President,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to brief the Council on the humanitarian situation in Somalia.

Since the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012, optimism over the expected progress in state and peace building and political and security improvements have not translated into an improvement of the humanitarian situation.

And Security Council resolution 2024 in support of the joint AMISOM and Somali National Army military offensive which resulted in military gains has not led to a substantial improvement in the daily lives of the people of Somalia.

Development indicators in Somalia remain among the worst in the world. One in seven children die before their first birthday; one in eighteen women die in childbirth; and only one in three people have access to safe drinking water. Global acute malnutrition levels among internally displaced persons are above global emergency levels of 15 per cent.

Approximately 857,000 people in Somalia require urgent and life-saving assistance. An additional 2 million people are on the margin of food insecurity and require continued livelihoods support. Decades of conflict have displaced over one million people inside Somalia. They are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and susceptible to human rights violations, such as rape.

An additional one million Somalis continue to seek refuge and protection in neighbouring countries.

Mr. President,

On Monday, FAO issued another alert that a below average harvest is expected in July and August, partly due to two poor rainy seasons.

The situation is further compounded by the ongoing military offensive, and the new Al Shabaab tactic of blocking major supply routes and encirclement of newly recovered areas.

Al Shabaab’s tactic of ‘encirclement’ has prevented commercial activity and humanitarian assistance to newly recovered areas. Access to basic commodities is limited and food prices have increased. For instance, the average price of basic items in Waajid,
Xudur and Maaxas in Bay, Bakool and Hiraan regions, have more than doubled. More than 70,000 people have been temporarily displaced as a result of the conflict, significantly disrupting the planting season.

We have carried out assessments in four of the newly recovered towns, as well as in Afgoye and Baidoa. Tens of thousands of people have sought refuge as a result of the offensive in these two locations. The assessments confirm that people have limited access to food, water, primary health care and nutrition supplies. Insecurity has prevented us from assessing the remaining towns.

Mr. President,

Humanitarian partners are steadfast in their commitment to assist the people of Somalia.

Funding received so far this year helped us reach over 1 million people with food and livelihoods assistance, and 97,000 children were treated for malnutrition. Water and sanitation interventions supported 400,000 people and 500,000 people benefited from basic health services. A massive and well-coordinated vaccination campaign targeting 4 million people in 2013 managed to contain the polio outbreak of that year.

Unfortunately, one case was confirmed today in Puntland.

Mr. President,

Humanitarian workers in Somalia continue to face tremendous challenges in carrying out their work.

Large parts of southern and central Somalia, mainly rural areas and outskirts of the main towns, remain under the control or influence of Al Shabaab. Al Shabaab’s ability to disrupt and infiltrate areas under the control of the Somali Federal Government continues to hamper aid delivery, and in some instances has forced agencies to resort to costly air operations. Al Shabaab have carried out bold and targeted attacks on Government officials, international organizations and humanitarian workers. This is of grave concern, and we are working to enhance measures to mitigate threats against aid workers.

Unpredictable bureaucratic impediments imposed by local and regional administrations, including arbitrary taxation, payment of registration fees, and the need for aid agencies to seek approval for recruitment of staff, renting of premises and choice of national partners often inhibit the ability of agencies to access people in need.

Despite the commitment of the international community to avert another humanitarian disaster in Somalia, financial support is especially low this year. Only 19 per cent of the US$933 million humanitarian appeal is funded.

Some donors have announced a decrease of their contribution in 2014 and we expect this will continue into 2015. Remittances, another lifeline for millions of Somalis, are at risk as banks continue to threaten to close Somali Money Transfer Organisations as they are seen as a high risk for illegal activities.

This limited funding has forced the humanitarian community to cut back on all but the most basic of interventions. There is great risk that the gains made in the past years will be reversed. For instance, if funding is not secured immediately, UNICEF may
suspend primary healthcare activities that provide medical services to more than 3 million people. UNICEF has also warned that 50,000 children under the age of five could die from severe malnutrition if funding is not received. Water and sanitation supplies to some IDP settlements in Mogadishu have ceased because of lack of funding, and we are receiving reports of increased Acute Watery Diarrhea in these areas.

Mr. President,
Somalia remains one of the most complex environments in which to deliver assistance. However, to the extent possible, humanitarian partners are managing rather than avoiding risk, in order to be able to continue to deliver critical, life-saving programmes.

Assistance continues to be delivered through local partners in many parts of Somalia where agencies are not able to operate directly. In limited instances, there have been cases of diversion. However, thanks to the UN’s Risk Management Unit, and other monitoring systems, we are now better able to detect risks, evaluate the capacity of our local partners and track programs, with stronger reporting and auditing tools.

Mr. President,
Urgent action must be taken to prevent the country from slipping back into a major humanitarian crisis.

Early warnings must trigger early action so that Somalia moves towards and not away from food security; that it remains polio-free; and that the resilience of the people is reinforced.

We are asking for an immediate injection of $60 million for the next three months to address urgent food, nutrition and healthcare needs.

I also ask Security Council Members:
• To continue hosting Somali asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants and ensure their protection and safety.
• To ensure that refugee returns are voluntary and conducted in a safe and dignified manner.
• To help us secure additional funding.
• To work with banks and Somali Money Transfer Operators to put in place a transitional mechanism until a proper financial system is established.
• To support ongoing humanitarian initiatives that contribute to predictable, safe and sustained access to affected people.

We need to work together to manage and share the risks involved in continued humanitarian operations.

Failure to address humanitarian needs today will not only undermine the peace and state building gains of the last two years but will also lead to further crises. We do not want to see a repeat of 2011 when parts of Somalia faced a famine.

Somalia must remain a priority for us all.

Thank you.