



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

For Immediate Release

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UN Special Representative moves to Mogadishu - first time in 17 years

Mogadishu, 24 January 2012 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Somalia, Ambassador Augustine P. Mahiga today moved the office of the SRSG back to Mogadishu after an absence of 17 years. Ambassador Mahiga, who was welcomed at the airport by Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, Somali Officials and foreign diplomats, said he was delighted that the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) would now be working from the capital.

“I sincerely hope that the arrival of the UN Political Office will mark the start of renewed hope for the future of Somalia,” said Ambassador Mahiga. “Being in Mogadishu will allow us to work far more closely with the Transitional Federal Institutions, the UN agencies and NGOs already based here, civil society and ordinary Somalis. We have much to do and we are eager to get straight to work.”

The last SRSG to be based in Mogadishu, James Victor Gbeho of Ghana, who was with the UN Operations in Somalia II (UNOSOM II), left in early 1995. UNPOS was established shortly afterwards and was based in Nairobi. However UN staff remained in Somalia throughout the following years and at present six agencies have permanent staff in Mogadishu.

After the airport welcome and the raising of the UN Flag, the SRSG proceeded to Villa Somalia to be officially welcomed by President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. The SRSG then travelled back to AMISOM Headquarters to meet the Deputy Force Commander, inspect a Guard of Honour and pay tribute to the remarkable sacrifice of both the AU forces and Somali Security Services in advancing the cause of peace.

“Without the incredible efforts and sacrifice of the troops from Somalia and other African countries, we would not be here today,” said Ambassador Mahiga. He pledged to the Somalis that the UNPOS move to Somalia would herald the beginning of a new era of cooperation and political engagement as the transitional period draws to a close.



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The SRSG will spend Wednesday at Villa Somalia for discussions with his Somali interlocutors on resolving the ongoing Parliamentary crisis and will also meet the UN Country Team.

“Now we are here working among you, I believe we will see significant progress on implementing priority tasks in the Roadmap to restore peace and stability to Somalia,” the SRSG said.