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UN Special Representative lauds Somali talks on Justice and Reconciliation

Djibouti, 23 November 2008 – The UN Special Representative for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, applauded the convening of a two-day workshop to address the critical challenges of Justice and Reconciliation in Somalia.

“Impunity is a condemnable scourge in any society so I am pleased to see that for the first time, impunity in Somalia is being debated,” Mr. Ould-Abdallah said. “Impunity has been addressed in many post-conflict countries such as Burundi, Cambodia, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Time has come to address impunity and crimes committed by Somalis since the beginning of the civil war. I am very happy that Somalis and representatives of the international community have convened to focus on this crucial issue.

“I am also pleased to announce that after a two-day meeting of the working group on Justice and Reconciliation, the two parties to the Djibouti Agreement, the TFG (Transitional Federal Government) and the ARS (Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia), have stated their commitment to work closely together to address vigorously the problem of impunity.”

To this end, it was agreed to establish a working group to facilitate a process of broader consultation leading to the formation of appropriate mechanisms to address impunity. They agreed in particular to examine the possibility of establishing a Commission of Inquiry and an international court. “I urge all parties, and the international community, to support the cooperation between Somalis to bring an end to impunity,” Mr. Ould-Abdallah said.

These Somali talks take place at a time when piracy—a result of violence and impunity in Somalia—continues to threaten the safety of the international maritime activity off the coast of Somalia with a negative economic and environmental impact, Mr. Ould-Abdallah said.

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