



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

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**SRSG welcomes positive vote by Somali Parliament on expansion**

Djibouti, 26 January 2009: - The UN Special Representative for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, has welcomed the overwhelming vote by Somalia's Transitional Federal Parliament in favour of expanding by an additional 275 Members.

"I am extremely encouraged by this vote and I would like to thank Somalia's leaders, the Parliamentarians and all those who have helped work towards such a positive step," said Mr Ould-Abdallah.

The Parliamentary vote, which took place at the People's Palace in Djibouti, resulted in 211 MPs voting in favour of expansion with six against and three abstentions.

The Transitional Federal Government and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia agreed last October on the outline of enlarging Somalia's Transitional Federal Parliament and forming a Government of National Unity.

Up to 200 new members of Parliament, selected by the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia are expected to be sworn in in Djibouti. The expanded Parliament will subsequently elect a new President, who will take the oath of office on 31 January.

The other 75 seats are being kept those still to join including members of civil society and opposition who are not members of the ARS.

"This is a very good result and will demonstrate to the Somali people that their leaders are committed to moving forward together to restore peace and stability," said Mr Ould-Abdallah. "It means Somalia will have a new President who will be able to attend the African Union Summit of Heads of State in Addis Ababa on 1 February demonstrating the progress that was made here in a short space of time.

"The international community has also made a key contribution with support for the Parliamentary meetings and, as always, Djibouti has provided most welcome hospitality and backing."

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