



## United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

For Immediate Release

**PRESS RELEASE 006/2009**

### **Somalia's expanded Parliament elects a new President**

Djibouti, 31 January 2009: - After a long night of voting, the members of Somalia's newly expanded Transitional Federal Parliament chose the Chairman of the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Aden, as Somalia's new President.

Eleven candidates stood in the first round in which Sheikh Sharif won the most votes but failed to win the necessary two thirds of the votes cast. The second round, between Sheikh Sharif and the son of former Somali President Barre, Maslah Mohamed Siyad, was won by Sheikh Sharif with more than two thirds of the votes cast.

The UN Special Representative for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, pointed out that, during the first round of voting, Sheikh Sharif, and the Prime Minister, Nur Hassan Hussein, the two leading figures in the ongoing Djibouti process, had both received strong support from Parliamentarians.

He praised the "open and transparent manner" in which the two rounds of voting were carried out.

"We are finally seeing progress from the hard work by all sides to create an inclusive Parliament," he said. "I would like to congratulate and encourage all the Parliamentarians to work for the good of the country."

Mr Ould-Abdallah said he was pleased that the candidates had pledged to support a Government of National Unity based on inclusion, tolerance and political cooperation.

“I am also pleased that the new President is committed to policies based on close cooperation with IGAD member states, particularly Somalia’s neighbours – Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya as well as with the African Union,” he said. “I understand they will work closely with all other international community members such as the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the European Union, the European Commission and the United Nations.”

Mr Ould-Abdallah said he would do his best to ensure that the international community would support the new Government of National Unity, provided the Government demonstrated its determination to promote a stable and tolerant Somalia.

“The international community has already pledged to support this process and I will do my best to ensure that the commitments from donors and partners are honoured.”

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