Press Release on behalf of the International Community and
Democratisation Steering Committee

Somaliland Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

14 May 2015

1. The International Community is seriously concerned over the decision by the Somaliland House of Elders (Guurti) to extend the terms of office of the House of Representatives and the President by 21 months. We are particularly alarmed that such a critical decision was taken without consensus among all Somaliland parties. Dialogue and consensus building have been defining elements of Somaliland’s peace and democratic credentials. In the eyes of the International Community, the Guurti’s decision places Somaliland’s democratic credentials at serious risk.

2. Pursuing the above-mentioned decision by the House of Elders unilaterally not only threatens to undermine stability and the democratic process within Somaliland; it would also damage Somaliland’s public image and undermine our long-standing partnership. We therefore call for immediate structured dialogue on the election timeline and the term extension in line with the announcement by Vice-President Abdirahman Isma’il Seylici today, and earlier announcements by President Silanyo. Such a dialogue should revisit the Guurti’s decision and lead to an agreement to overcome the current crisis and ensure that the elections are held as soon as possible.

3. As Somaliland’s international partners we remain ready to engage in this process. Representatives of the International Community intend to visit Hargeisa in one week to continue dialogue on this important issue. International partners are now considering the implications and consequences of the Guurti’s decision which puts in jeopardy the foundations of the Somaliland Special Arrangement. In the meantime, we urge restraint and appeal to all stakeholders to make every effort to protect Somaliland’s democratic credentials, and call for the release of all of those arrested for political reasons. (END)