



DEEQA CONSTRUCTION

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Media Statement

Regarding Expected United Nations Somalia Sanctions Committee Report

The *New York Times* carried a front-page story on March 9 saying that a report is forthcoming from the UN Somalia Sanctions Committee alleging large-scale diversion of the UN World Food Program (WFP) humanitarian aid effort. An advance copy of the report was leaked to the *Times* by unknown parties perhaps seeking to build external support for the report prior to its official adoption by the UN Security Council. According to the *Times*, the Sanctions Committee report contains accusations that DEEQA, as a principal food-delivery contractor in the Somalia WFP, participated in the alleged diversion of aid.

If such allegations directed toward DEEQA were ultimately to be published by the UN, we would respond immediately to the Sanctions Committee and to interested media. Were the contents of any report to reflect the characterization of DEEQA's activities as presented in the *Times*, we would of course respond that they were baseless and possibly fabricated. For now, we wish to inform the several news outlets which have sent inquiries to our company that, for the past three months, we have been in active dialogue with the Sanctions Committee investigators, known as the Somalia Monitoring Group (SMG), as well as with assigned UN legal staff, regarding their interest in DEEQA.

Being aware that the relief effort in which we were a significant participant was under scrutiny, and having had firsthand experience with past iterations of the SMG that had, unfortunately, allowed flagrantly false and damaging hearsay to obtain the UN imprimatur in their reports, we voluntarily undertook to engage the investigators to ensure accuracy and fairness with respect to their examination of DEEQA. Our attentiveness to the process was intensified by the fact that leaks of official reports, much like the one to the *Times*, had been occurring in a manner that appeared to be designed to drive external opinion to accept a negative conclusion of the investigation as foregone.

The process of engagement with the SMG was difficult and trying, even with the assistance of the international legal counsel we retained in Washington, DC as an extra measure of caution. Though the SMG's pursuits are not officially intended to be guided by conventional rules of due process, our experience showed the investigation to be, at least insofar as the engagement of our company was concerned, extremely opaque, unpredictable, and far from thorough. Investigators sometimes did not understand basic operations of the WFP.

Despite our immediate, voluntary response to the SMG, it took nearly six weeks for us to extract any precise statement of the allegations the investigators had developed about DEEQA from third-party sources. Ironically, we were informed that we were receiving "more formal treatment" because we had brought lawyers into the equation. We learned that most information that the SMG uses is apparently derived from second- and third-hand statements from

individuals living in a war-torn, chaotic environment, or at a remove in the cafés or on the streets of Nairobi, rendering it virtually impossible to test for reliability. We were surprised to learn that the SMG's formal protocols and procedures permit—indeed, embrace—reliance on such hearsay information.

Nonetheless, we persevered and through exhaustive effort were able to comprehensively refute every allegation that the Monitoring Group placed before us. We did so through official documentation, written rebuttals, and oral arguments presented with the assistance of our U.S. attorneys. Now, with the release of the *Times* story, we fear that our labors may have been in vain. Indeed, the article leaves us deeply worried that this process may have gone seriously awry, perhaps for reasons that neither concern us directly nor are within our ability to fully grasp.

We are aware of the WFP's negative reaction to both the reported contents of the SMG investigation and the unauthorized manner in which they were publicized. We have also learned that other officials, both within the UN and among a number of member governments, have expressed doubts about the integrity of this process. In that vein, DEEQA welcomes enthusiastically any independent UN or other third-party investigation of the Somalia WFP and will fully cooperate with the expectation of definitively eliminating any concerns about DEEQA. But for now, we feel compelled to bide our time and to ask interested press to do the same while we clarify the situation with respect to the anticipated Somalia Sanctions Committee report.

Signed,
Abdulkadir Nur
CEO

About DEEQA

Founded in 1978, DEEQA is among the few companies that have operated in Somalia throughout the period of the civil war. We specialize in construction of roads, ports, airstrips, hospitals, irrigation systems and public buildings, as well as water-well drilling. Our work force, which fluctuates with projects, has reached as high as 10,000 people. DEEQA is the oldest and most reliable partner supporting a range of international aid organizations in Somalia. Food transport, including for the WFP, ADRA, ICRC, CARE and UNICEF has been a principal activity of DEEQA for the past twenty years.

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