



South West State of Somalia Free Zone Investment Authority

H.E. Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, President

SOUTH WEST STATE PRESIDENTIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

FREE ZONE INVESTMENT AUTHORITY AND PRIVATE-SECTOR MANAGEMENT

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BAIDOA, SOUTH WEST STATE – His Excellency Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, President of the South West State of Somalia, announced today the commissioning of the Free Zone Investment Authority (FZIA), a private sector-led agency of the South West State Administration created to promote investment in the South West State, create jobs, and help stabilize the region economically for internally displaced persons (IDP), returning refugees, and diaspora seeking to engage and invest in their homeland. FZIA has been developed in line with the Somali Federal Constitution and National Development Plan, and in accordance with the South West State Strategic Plan.

President Sharif made the following statement:

“South West State is preparing for international investment in infrastructure and local enterprises. We are coordinating efforts according to global standards and best practices. FZIA, an official agency of the South West State Administration, will coordinate Government to be a “single window” agency for promotion, contracting, and management of developmental projects, serving local citizens, entrepreneurs and investors, from small to medium to large scale, the economic drivers of the hopeful future of Somalia.

“We have brought together strong international business leaders to team-up with talented Somali entrepreneurs to make development in South West Somalia a reality. First Hectares Capital, led by Mr. Issa Baluch and Mr. Jon Vandenheuvel, along with Frontier Services Group, led by Mr. Erik Prince and Mr. Omri Cohen, not only have the international and regional experience, but most importantly, have exhibited a passion for the people of Somalia that will help us build opportunities for those who have suffered long enough.

“We are inviting all Somalis, those currently living in Somalia and those living abroad, to believe in the future of Somalia and invest this exciting effort in South West State.”

President Sharif announced the appointment of **First Hectares Capital**, an international project development company founded by Dubai freight and logistics industry magnate, Professor Issa Baluch, to serve as the Executive Management of the FZIA. First Hectares CEO, Mr. Jon Vandenheuvel, will serve as interim FZIA Executive Director.

President Sharif and FZIA also announced the appointment of **Frontier Services Group**, a publicly-traded Hong Kong-based project management firm chaired by American entrepreneur Mr. Erik Prince, to serve as the Project Management Organization of the FZIA. Project lead will be Mr. Omri Cohen, Managing Director of FSG for East Africa.

The Presidency and FZIA further announce the formation of the **South West Somalia Services Company**, a government-sponsored enterprise to recruit and coordinate Somali small and medium-size enterprises (SME) for local Somali contracting, partnership, and employment opportunities associated with FZIA-supported initiatives.

FZIA will have offices in Baidoa, Baraawe, and Mogadishu, and international representation in the United States and other countries to be announced.

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