

## Ministers Speech

Good evening to all of you distinguished guests. Tonight the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2005 we signed a historic contract here at the Hilton Dubai between Puntland Government and Consort. This contract, like Dr Black, just mentioned went through a lengthy 7 month discussion between the parties, tonight is the conclusion of that hard work. The contract is based on the exploration and exploitation of the minerals in Puntland.

Our country needs a lot of development and there is been a lot of speculation for quite sometime that we have a lot of wealth in our subsoil, and because of our limitations to research it or even dig it, we decided to give to a company that can help us develop it so that our people can take advantage and move forward like other countries did in the past.

The people that worked to make this night possible showed us a lot of strength and courage, they were a lot of lies said about them, not only in Somalia but also abroad. It involved foreign countries and companies whose sole interest is to keep Puntland as a reserve and come and develop it as they please. Consort and Dr Black are showing the rest of the world that Puntland is open for business. They saw with their own eyes that what is on the newspapers is not the whole truth. The picture that they give about Somalia is inaccurate, and based on their experience in Puntland, Consort is willing to come and do business with us.

As the Government of Puntland we have no intention of taking anything that is not ours, we only want to develop what belongs to Puntland.

I want to thank everybody who worked towards the realization of this contract, beginning with the president, Consort people, and other dignitaries of the government. A special thanks to Liban Bogor, who for the last six months forgot about his family, and put aside his own work to make this concession agreement something that both parties agree on.

I want to tell you distinguished guests, that as of today there is a mountain of work waiting for Consort and the government, but I am confident that we are both going to rise to the challenge. As a government will promise all our efforts to help Consort do their work.

Thank you, and now let me welcome the president to the mike.