Jendayi E. Frazer, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and Mohamed Ibrahim Warsame, distinguished Somali poet, playwright and peace activist, are among many speakers who will share their insights into the critical issues facing Somalis in their war-torn region as well as in emerging Somali communities throughout the world, during the Somali Studies International Conference to be held on the Ohio State campus, August 15 – 18, 2007. The Ohio State Center for African Studies in the Office of International Affairs is co-hosting the event that promises to provide attendees with diverse perspectives on the challenges and opportunities presented by the influx of Somalis in their new communities. The Ohio University Institute for the African Child and the Somali Studies International Association also are co-hosts of this tenth annual conference.

Warsame will share his reflections on the challenges faced by Somalis at the conference welcome dinner on Aug. 15 at 6 p.m. at the Fawcett Center. Frazer will serve as the keynote speaker on Aug. 16 at 10:15 a.m. where she will address an expected audience of over 300 at the Fawcett Center.

More than 50 plenary sessions are scheduled over the four-day conference and include panel discussions on three key areas: cultural integration of Somalis; economic factors relating to workforce development; and identity and resettlement issues. Panelists leading the discussion sessions include educators, leaders in business and government and social and human service professionals from central Ohio and around the world who are involved in working with and helping the Somali community.

Specific topics include:

- Refugee Education, Cultural Barriers and Social Integration
- Somali Immigrants and Refugees in Ohio: Trends, Challenges and Services
- Somali Nationhood, Identity and Conflict Resolution
- International Disaster Relief and Implications for Somalia
- Overcoming Conflict and Promoting Peace in Somalia
- Transnational Remittance, Business and Commerce

Registration is required for the four-day conference. For more information about conference fees, times and locations, and to view a complete agenda that includes more than 50 break-out sessions, visit www.somalistudies.org or contact Laura Joseph at the Ohio State Center for African Studies at (614) 292-8169.