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**3<sup>rd</sup> MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE ENHANCEMENT  
OF SECURITY COOPERATION AND THE OPERATIONALISATION  
OF THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE  
IN THE SAHELO-SAHARAN REGION**

**NIAMEY, NIGER  
19 FEBRUARY 2014**

**CONCLUSIONS**

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1. The 3<sup>rd</sup> ministerial meeting of the countries on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the Sahelo-Saharan region was held in Niamey, Niger, on 19 February 2014, within the framework of the Nouakchott Process, initiated by the African Union (AU), in March 2013. The meeting was held in follow up to the ministerial meetings held in Nouakchott and Ndjamena on 17 March and 11 September 2013, respectively, and took place on the heels of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services held in Niamey on 17 February 2014.

2. Ministers and other representatives of the following countries participated in the meeting: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. The President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the acting Secretary-General of the Community of the Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), as well as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa (UNOWA) and the Special Representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission for Mali (MINUSMA), also participated in the meeting. In addition, the Director of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the Executive Secretary of the Committee of the Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), the Coordinator of the Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL) and the Deputy Executive Secretary of the North Africa Regional Capability (NARC) also participated in the meeting. The AU Commissioner for Peace and Security and the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL) were also in attendance.

3. The opening ceremony was marked by statements made by Ambassador Smail Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security; Mr. Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo, President of the ECOWAS Commission; Mr. Ibrahim Abani, acting Secretary-General of CEN-SAD; Ambassador Said Djinnit, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa; and Mr. Mohamed Bazoum, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad of the Republic of Niger.

4. Participants exchanged views and agreed as follows:

### **Overall situation in the Sahelo-Saharan Region and enhancement of security cooperation**

5. Participants reviewed the political and security situation in the region since their last meeting, held in Ndjamena, on 11 September 2013. In this regard, they welcomed the positive evolution of the political situation in Mali, marked by the completion of the transition process, through the successful holding of the legislative elections whose first and second rounds were held on 24 November 2013 and 15 December 2013, respectively. They also welcomed the recent progress made in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement of 18 June 2013, particularly the conclusion, with the support of MINUSMA, of an agreement on the encampment of the elements of the armed groups. They urged for the continuation of the efforts made within this framework, and encouraged all countries participating in the Nouakchott Process, as well as the relevant international organizations, to continue to lend the necessary support to the Malian Government and other stakeholders, on the basis of national ownership and leadership. Participants also took

note of the progress made in the deployment of MINUSMA, and welcomed the prospects for the enhancement of the Mission both in terms of strength and logistical capability.

6. Participants also noted with satisfaction the continuous efforts aimed at building confidence and promoting good neighborliness in the Sahelo-Saharan region. Within that framework, they welcomed the visits which President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of Mali undertook to Mauritania and Algeria in January 2014. They encouraged the pursuit of such initiatives. They urged the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa to continue to support the efforts of the countries of the region, including through continuous interaction with their leaders.

7. With regard to the security situation in the region, participants, while welcoming the overall positive developments recorded during the period under consideration, expressed concern at the persistence of the terrorist threat, as evidenced by the recent events in northern Mali and the attacks that the Boko Haram and Ansaru groups continue to carry out in Nigeria. They noted with deep concern the growing magnitude of the scourge of transnational crime and its linkages to terrorism. Participants also stressed the difficult situation obtaining in Libya, which calls for an increased engagement of the region and the continent as a whole, to help this brotherly country overcome the challenges facing it, in a spirit of African solidarity.

8. Participants, cognizant of the need to pursue and intensify the efforts made, endorsed the operational conclusions of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of the countries of the region, held in Niamey, on 17 February 2014, noting with appreciation the offer made by Burkina Faso to host the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. They stressed their determination to implement the measures agreed upon. They requested the Commission to take all the necessary steps to ensure effective follow-up, including through the preparation of a matrix identifying all the measures to be taken, as well as the actors concerned. They also requested the Commission to ensure the necessary follow-up, at the regional level, of the conclusions of the workshop, organized by the AU in collaboration with the 1540 Committee and with the support of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, on the implementation, in Africa, of resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-state actors, adopted by the UN Security Council on 28 April 2004. Participants noted with appreciation the efforts made by ECOWAS and CEN-SAD in the fight against terrorism and transnational crime. In this regard, they called for the pursuit of the efforts undertaken by the Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), established by the ECOWAS Summit in 2000, as well as those exerted within the framework of the Praia Political Declaration and Plan of Action on Drug Trafficking in the region, adopted by ECOWAS in 2008. Finally, participants called for the development of close cooperation between the Intelligence and Security Services of the countries of the region and the Intelligence Cell that MINUSMA intends to put in place.

9. Participants also welcomed the establishment in Algiers, on 9 February 2014, of a structure bringing together, under AU aegis, the police institutions in the continent (AFRIPOL). They stressed that AFRIPOL is a valuable tool for enhancing police and judicial cooperation in Africa.

10. Participants welcomed the invitation extended by Libya to the AU for it to conduct an assessment mission that would include relevant structures of the Union, to better identify the challenges at hand in southern Libya and make recommendations on the collective action to be undertaken by Libya and the neighboring countries within the framework of the Nouakchott Process. Participants looked forward to the meeting to be held in Rome on 6 March 2014, under the auspices of the Italian and Libyan Governments, to mobilize more effective international support for Libya, in the light of the security challenges facing the country. Participants agreed that the neighboring countries invited and Libya would hold consultations prior the Rome meeting, in order to harmonize their positions and facilitate the attainment of the set objectives. They requested Niger, with the support of the AU Commission, to facilitate the holding of the planned consultation as soon as possible.

11. Participants welcomed the measures envisaged regarding the operationalization, as soon as possible, of the secure communication system among the intelligence and security services of the Sahelo-Saharan countries. They also welcomed the offer made by UFL to extend in the meantime its secure communication system to three countries of the Nouakchott Process that are not members of the UFL, as well as to ACSRT, CISSA and MISAHEL.

12. Furthermore, participants requested the Commission, in cooperation with the United Nations and other actors concerned, to set up a team of experts to map out the different threats to security in the region, with a particular focus on terrorist and other armed and criminal groups operating in the region. The outcome of this mapping exercise will be presented at the next ministerial meeting of the countries participating in the Nouakchott Process.

#### **Next steps in the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture**

13. Participants reaffirmed the commitment of their respective organizations and countries to work towards the continued implementation of the Nouakchott Process, acknowledging that this Process provides a unique framework for a common approach to the security challenges facing the region on the basis of shared vision and collective responsibility.

14. In this respect, participants, having welcomed the decisions on the assessment of the African Standby Force (ASF) and on the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), agreed on the following measures aimed at facilitating the operationalization of the APSA in the Sahelo-Saharan region:

- (i) the convening of meetings of the Chiefs of Defense Staff and Ministers of Defense to consider the generic Concepts of Operation for joint patrols and mixed units, as well as the modalities for strengthening the existing cooperation structures and all other modalities of collaboration between and among the countries of the region. In this respect, participants welcomed the offer by Mali to host these meetings at a date to be agreed upon with the AU Commission. They requested the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, Pierre Buyoya, in consultation with all concerned actors, to undertake consultation missions to the countries of the region to facilitate this process;

- (ii) the convening of a Summit of the countries participating in the Nouakchott Process, to mobilize further political support for the Process and enhance ownership by the countries of the region; and
- (iii) the establishment, under MISAHÉL leadership, of a lean Secretariat in Niamey, to better coordinate the implementation of the Nouakchott Process, pending its possible transformation into an Executive Secretariat linked to MISAHÉL.

#### **On strategies and initiatives regarding the Sahel**

15. Participants stressed that the Nouakchott Process is one of the components of the integrated and holistic approaches to the challenges facing the Sahelo-Saharan region. In this respect, they welcomed the elaboration by the AU of a Strategy for the Sahel region and commended the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel and his team for the efforts made. They validated the document in light of the observations made, notably those relating to the issue of coordination with existing initiatives and the recognition of the role of the relevant regional organizations in the implementation of the Strategy. Similarly, the participants stressed that the Strategy should foster the implementation, within the Sahelo-Saharan region, of the major continental initiatives, particularly those conducted by NEPAD, on infrastructure and development. They agreed that all the observations made would be reflected in the final text of the Strategy. Participants urged AU Member States and international partners to extend support for the effective implementation of the AU Strategy.

16. Participants also noted with satisfaction the measures taken by the UN system, under the leadership of the UN Special Representative for West Africa, towards the implementation of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. They welcomed the ECOWAS efforts, as well as those of other international institutions, notably the European Union (EU). Acknowledging the need for close coordination of all initiatives, in support of the countries of the region and on the basis of regional ownership, participants hailed the efforts being deployed by the Office of the UN Special Representative for West Africa and MISAHÉL towards the establishment of the Technical Secretariat for the Coordination Platform of the different strategies for the Sahel, notably through the preliminary meeting organized, in Bamako, on 28 January 2014, and the meeting scheduled for 21 February 2014, also in Bamako.

#### **Vote of Thanks**

17. Participants thanked the Government and the people of Niger for having hosted the ministerial meeting and the preparatory meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services, as well as for their hospitality and the arrangements made to facilitate the smooth holding of these meetings. In particular, they expressed deep gratitude to President Mahamadou Issoufou, for his personal and continued commitment in fostering peace, security and development in the region.

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# Conclusions, 3rd Ministerial meeting on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan Region Niamey, Niger 19 February 2014

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