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**FIFTH MEETING OF THE HEADS OF INTELLIGENCE
AND SECURITY SERVICES OF THE COUNTRIES OF
THE SAHELO-SAHARAN REGION**

**19-20 MAY 2014
OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO**

OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS

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1. The 5th meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services (HISS) of the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region took place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 19 and 20 May 2014. The following countries participated in the meeting: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. In addition to the Commission of the African Union (AU), the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the Committee of the Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), the Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL), the Community of the Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the North African Regional Capability (NARC), as well as the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), also participated in the meeting.

2. The meeting was held within the framework of the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the Sahelo-Saharan Region. It was a follow-up to the previous meetings of the HISS of the countries of the region, held respectively in Bamako, on 18 April 2013, in Abidjan, on 20 and 21 June 2013, in N'Djamena, on 10 September 2013, and in Niamey, on 17 and 18 February 2014.

3. The opening ceremony was marked by the statements made by General Gilbert Diendéré, Chief of Staff in the Office of the President of the Faso, Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, and the Minister of Territorial Administration and Security of Burkina Faso, Dr. Jerome Bougouma.

I. Review of the evolution of the security situation in the Sahelo-Saharan region

4. The meeting reviewed the evolution of the security situation in the region, based on the overall presentation made by the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, former President Pierre Buyoya, as well as the contributions made by the ACSRT, CISSA, UFL and the countries of the region.

5. In this regard, Participants noted the worrying developments that had taken place since their last meeting. In particular, they highlighted, with deep concern, the continuing attempts to regroup by the terrorist entities in northern Mali, the multiplication of their attacks, including the use of improvised explosive devices against the Malian army, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the forces of the Serval Operation, as well as the serious incidents that took place in Kidal following the visit of the Malian Prime Minister to this part of the national territory. They stressed the humanitarian consequences arising from the prevailing insecurity. Participants also expressed their deep concern about the intensification of the campaign of terror waged by the Boko Haram group, as illustrated by the kidnapping of more than 200 schoolgirls in the North East of the country. Participants reiterated the concern of the region in the face of the development of the situation in Libya, marked by a new escalation of violence and the weakening of the authority of the State, with the risk of offering sanctuary for terrorist groups in some parts of the country. Finally, Participants pointed out the numerous instances of drug seizure made over the past few months, which are evidence of the extent of illegal drug trafficking in the region, and the growing links between terrorism and transnational organized crime.

6. Participants noted the persistent threat of religious radicalization, which provides fertile ground for the recruitment of terrorists and criminal elements. They stressed the need, building on the relevant regional experiences, for more vigorous action to deal with that phenomenon, including the surveillance and monitoring of the activities of foreign preachers,

who operate in isolated communities and regions and propagate intolerant interpretation of the religion.

7. Participants welcomed the increased mobilization of the countries of the region against the scourge of terrorism and transnational organized crime, as evidenced by the first meeting of the Heads of the Intelligence Services of the Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held in Accra, Ghana, on 14 May 2014. They were informed about the conclusions of that meeting by the Chief of Staff in the Office of the President of the Faso. They stressed the need for close coordination between all ongoing initiatives.

8. Regarding more specifically the efforts being made with respect to dialogue in Mali, Participants welcomed the momentum generated by the preliminary consultations undertaken by Algeria to create the necessary conditions towards the success of the inclusive inter-Malian dialogue, as agreed to by Mali and its neighbors during their consultative meeting held in Algiers, on 22 April 2014.

II. Status of the implementation of the Operational Conclusions of Niamey

9. Participants reviewed the status of implementation of the operational conclusions of the Niamey meeting. They reiterated the need for more sustained efforts to ensure prompt exchange of information and intelligence among the Services, as agreed in Niamey.

10. Participants welcomed the progress made regarding capacity building during the period under consideration, particularly:

- (i) the continuation of the capacity building activities carried out by the ACSRT and the UFL, especially the Workshop on strengthening border related counter-terrorism capacities in the Sahel through international databases and enhanced cooperation, coordination and information exchanges, held in Algiers, from 3 to 5 March 2014; and
- (ii) the launch, by the ACSRT, in cooperation with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), of national courses on the implementation of the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

11. Participants were briefed by the UFL on the ongoing arrangements to extend its secure communication system to the three Member States of the Nouakchott Process which are not members of the UFL, as well as to the MISAHEL and CISSA. They commended the UFL for its efforts and took note of the commitment to help CISSA overcome the difficulties faced in the establishment of its own secure communication system. These efforts should be completed before the convening of the 6th meeting of the HISS.

12. Participants welcomed the initiation by MISAHEL of periodic consultations among the Defence Attachés of the countries participating in the Nouakchott Process accredited to Mali. They stressed that these consultations contribute significantly to greater ownership of the Process by the countries of the region.

13. Participants also noted with satisfaction the follow up of the provisions of the Conclusions of the Niamey meeting on support to Libya, with the holding in Niamey, on 1 March 2014, of a meeting bringing together Libya and its neighbors, organized by the AU with the support of CEN-SAD, as well as the informal ministerial level consultation held in Rome on 5 March 2014, in preparation for the meeting of the Friends of Libya, held in Rome, on 6 March 2014. Participants fully supported those efforts and stressed the need for their continuation.

14. Participants were informed of the progress made in the efforts concerning the elaboration of an African Arrest warrant, particularly the consultations held by ACSRT with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit (Eurojust). They urged for the pursuit of these efforts to facilitate the finalization as early as possible of the elaboration process of the African Arrest Warrant.

15. Participants discussed the contribution of CISSA to the work of the relevant Services in the Sahelo-Saharan region. They stressed the need and urgency for strengthening that contribution. They agreed to re-discuss this issue at their next meeting, bearing in mind that the CISSA has now been integrated into the AU Commission.

16. With regard to the operationalization of the APSA, Participants were informed about the ongoing efforts to convene the envisaged meeting of the Chiefs of Defense Staff and Ministers of Defense of the countries of the region to consider the generic Concepts of Operation prepared by the Commission in order to facilitate the efficient conduct of, and resort as frequently as possible to, coordinated / joint patrols at the borders and the establishment of mixed units, as well as modalities for strengthening other existing cooperation security structures in the region. Similarly, Participants were informed about the steps taken by the Commission for the convening of a Summit of the countries participating in the Nouakchott Process.

III. On the next steps of the Nouakchott Process

17. Aware of the need for continued enhancement of the security cooperation among the countries of the region, Participants agreed on the following:

- (i) the adoption of specific measures to enhance the exchange of information and intelligence, including by agreeing on the format of the presentations made at the regular meetings of the HISS and by exchanging intelligence briefs on specific events requiring urgent coordinated action. The AU Commission would transmit to the member countries of the Nouakchott Process a format for this purpose;
- (ii) the rationalization and coordination of capacity building activities, as well as their continuous adaptation to the evolving specific needs of the countries of the region and the nature of the threats facing them. The ACSRT, CISSA and UFL were requested to submit a report on the matter within one month, which would be considered at the 6th meeting of the HISS;
- (iii) the finalization of the extension of the UFL secure communication system to the member countries concerned of the Nouakchott Process and to MISAHEL, it being understood that the UFL should submit a report thereon at the 6th meeting of the HISS; and
- (iv) the presentation of forward looking approaches on the different situations in the Sahelo-Saharan region by the participants.

18. Regarding the specific issue of Boko Haram, Participants expressed their strong condemnation of the terrorist acts perpetrated by this group, as well as their full support to the efforts of the Nigerian Government to address the situation, and welcomed the measures already taken by Nigeria and the neighboring countries to better coordinate their actions. They expressed their full solidarity with the families of the kidnapped school girls and expressed the hope that all the efforts being made to secure their release would succeed soon. They noted the grave humanitarian consequences caused by the terrorist activities of the Boko Haram

group and called for the mobilization of adequate humanitarian assistance for the affected populations.

19. Participants expressed their conviction that the relevant continental and regional instruments, notably the AU Strategy for the Sahel, as well as the 1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and its 2004 Protocol, offer an appropriate framework to efficiently combat the Boko Haram group and bring to an end its terrorist activities. In this respect, they stressed the need for renewed efforts towards the implementation of these instruments.

20. In a more operational manner, and in order to strengthen the ongoing efforts, Participants agreed as follows:

- (i) the dispatch, under the AU's auspices, of a team of experts comprising the representatives of the Intelligence and Security Services of the countries concerned by the Boko Haram threat, ACSRT, CISSA and the UFL, to exchange intelligence and experiences with the relevant Nigerian officials and make recommendations on the possible contribution of the other Sahelo-Saharan countries to the strengthening of the fight against Boko Haram, including within the framework of the current initiatives of the countries of the Lake Chad Basin, for which financial support should be mobilized. This mission should take place in the next two weeks;
- (ii) the establishment in Abuja, in close coordination with the Nigerian Government, of an *ad hoc* coordination cell, comprising the relevant representatives of the member countries of the Nouakchott Process and other countries affected by the activities of Boko Haram, in order to facilitate real time exchange of information and intelligence. The AU Commission is tasked to assist in the follow-up of the implementation of this measure;
- (iii) the launching, by the AU, within the framework of its Strategy for the Sahel, of a campaign to combat radicalization and promote de-radicalization, which will involve religious leaders, civil society, media and other stakeholders, as part of the efforts directed against the intolerance and barbaric acts of the Boko Haram group;
- (iv) the convening by the AU of a regional meeting on the implementation of the relevant AU instruments, such as the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and its Protocol, in order to more effectively use the cooperative arrangements contained therein in the fight against Boko Haram and other similar entities;
- (v) the submission to the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) of a recommendation aimed at formally declaring the Boko Haram group and the organizations associated with it as terrorist groups and obtaining their designation as such by the UN Security Council; and
- (vi) the launching by the AU Commission of a study on the urgent establishment of a Regional Task Force, building on the experience of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA), to facilitate effective regional action against Boko Haram, and submission of appropriate recommendations to the PSC.

21. Regarding the operationalisation of the APSA in the Sahelo-Saharan region, Participants looked forward to the convening in Bamako, as soon as possible, of the proposed meeting of the Chiefs of Defense Staff and the Ministers of Defense. They requested the countries of the Nouakchott Process to include in their delegations experts from both internal and external

security services. They stressed that these meetings should enable the countries of the region, particularly within the framework of UN peacekeeping operations, to contribute collectively to specific arrangements put in place to combat terrorism.

IV. Next meeting of the HISS

22. Participants welcomed the offer made by Senegal to host the 6th meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services, at a date to be fixed after consultation between the Commission and the relevant Senegalese authorities.

23. Participants expressed their gratitude to the Government and people of Burkina Faso for the warm welcome extended to them and for the excellent arrangements made to ensure the smooth conduct of their meeting. They particularly expressed their deep gratitude to the President of the Faso, H.E. Blaise Compaoré, to whom they paid a courtesy visit during which they exchanged views with him on the situation in the region and the efforts to address the current threats.

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Operational Conclusions, Fifth Meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of the Countries of the Sahelo-Saharan Region 19-20 May 2014 Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

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