



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Loulichki	(Morocco)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Ilichev
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2012/894)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2012/894)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Mr. Kadré Ouédraogo, President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States; and Mr. Tété António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/894, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.

I now give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: I would like to thank members of the Council for this opportunity to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on Mali (S/2012/894). As requested by the Security Council in resolution 2071 (2012) of 12 October 2012, the report provides an overview of developments in the country since January, and outlines the efforts of the United Nations system, as well as those of national, regional and international actors, in responding to the crisis in Mali and in implementing resolution 2071 (2012). The report also provides recommendations on the way forward.

The Secretary-General fully shares the profound sense of urgency of the Security Council and of regional Member States regarding the crisis in Mali. The political situation in Bamako has become more complex, especially as a result of deep divisions between Malian political stakeholders over how to implement key national priorities. The national dialogue, which is expected to serve as the forum to discuss and agree on the implementation of those priorities, has not been convened due to disagreement over the modalities and

objectives of the process. The national dialogue is now scheduled to take place during the second week of December.

Even before the national dialogue convenes, regional partners are moving forward to address the pressing need for a viable political process. Following talks convened by the Mediator of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), President Blaise Compaoré, on 6 and 16 November in Ouagadougou, two of the armed groups based in northern Mali — the Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad (MNLA) and Ansar Dine — have confirmed their participation in negotiations facilitated by him. On the basis of that agreement, President Compaoré wrote to the interim President of Mali, Dioncounda Traoré, on 21 November inviting him to send a delegation of the Malian Government for a first formal round of talks. On 4 December, the ECOWAS Mediator facilitated a meeting between a delegation from the Malian Government, led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tiéman Coulibaly, and representatives of Ansar Dine and MNLA in Ouagadougou. According to a communiqué issued by the ECOWAS mediation following the meeting, the parties agreed on some principles, including the primacy of dialogue, respect for the national unity and territorial integrity of Mali, respect for human rights and the freedom of religion, and the rejection of terrorism and extremism.

Our collective sense of urgency derives in part, of course, because the security situation in the north of the country has continued to deteriorate. On 16 November, the MNLA launched an offensive against the Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO) in the north-eastern region of Gao. Clashes between the two groups also took place on 19 November in the town of Menaka, near the border of the Niger. MUJAO has since claimed that it has seized control of the town. Both groups have also reported that Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) backed MUJAO in the clashes. Reports indicated that many civilians have fled from the region of Gao and moved closer to the border of the Niger or the surrounding desert due to the fighting. Twelve civilians have been reportedly killed during the attacks. As further evidence of the increasing insecurity in the north, on 27 November, a spokesman for Ansar Dine announced that the group had wrested control of the town of Lere, south west of Timbuktu, from the MNLA. In the meantime, there are continuing reports of jihadists and

terrorist elements arriving in the north of the country to join with the armed groups.

We share the alarm of the Council about the human rights situation in northern Mali. Gross human rights abuses continue to be perpetrated against the population in the north of the country, including cases of summary and extrajudicial execution, sexual and gender-based violence, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and torture. Moreover, Ansar Dine has continued its destruction of historical, cultural and holy sites in Timbuktu. On the humanitarian front, over 412,000 persons have been forced to flee northern Mali, half of them crossing the border into neighbouring countries. An estimated 5 million people have been affected by the conflict, the majority of whom are at risk of food insecurity. About 600,000 children under the age of five are facing severe malnutrition.

Since the adoption of resolution 2071 (2012), the United Nations system, recognizing the urgency and at the direction of the Secretary-General, has intensified and accelerated its efforts in Mali along two main tracks. The first is to give strong impetus to the Malian political process. The second is to support ECOWAS and the African Union in planning for an international force to support the Malian authorities in restoring the territorial integrity of the country, if this cannot be achieved through the political process, and addressing the threat posed by terrorist and affiliated groups.

With respect to the first track, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa, Mr. Said Djinnit, has significantly increased his political engagement with the authorities in Mali and key regional stakeholders to provide momentum to a Malian-owned political process focused on three main objectives: first, broad-based and inclusive national dialogue aimed at formulating a road map for the transition; secondly, negotiations with armed groups in the north that renounce violence and terrorism; and thirdly, preparations for the holding of elections.

The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Sahel, Mr. Romano Prodi, has also been active on the broader Sahel issues and will host a meeting of special envoys to the Sahel in Rome on 7 December to discuss, *inter alia*, the United Nations integrated strategy on the Sahel and the division of labour among special envoys. It is vital that we address transnational Sahel issues as part of the solution to the crisis in Mali.

Moreover, in response to a request by the transitional Government, a needs assessment mission was deployed by the Secretary-General to Bamako from 19 to 30 November to make recommendations aimed at addressing the challenges facing the electoral process, including those related to developing a framework for inclusive consultations and confidence-building measures. The assessment mission is finalizing its report. In the meantime, three high-level electoral experts have also been dispatched by the Secretary-General to work with the Resident Coordinator and the United Nations Development Programme to assist the Malian authorities in developing a detailed and realistic operational plan, including a timeline and budget, for the holding of transparent and credible elections.

Despite concerted international efforts, the political landscape in Mali remains complex and fragmented. It is critical that the key political actors arrive at a unified vision as soon as possible if they are to effectively focus efforts on the main transition challenges, in particular national dialogue and negotiations with the armed groups. The support of the international community will continue to be critical in helping the Malians to bridge differences and arrive at a national consensus. It is in this context that the Secretary-General intends to establish a full time United Nations political presence in Bamako, which will be responsible for interacting with key Malian stakeholders on a daily basis under my direction, and who will report to both his Special Representative for West Africa and his Special Envoy for the Sahel.

As the Secretary-General notes in his report, a military operation may be required as a last resort to deal with the most hard-line extremist and criminal elements in northern Mali. In this regard, United Nations military and police planners have worked closely with ECOWAS and the African Union, in close consultation with the Malian authorities, in developing a strategic operational framework for the proposed African-led international support mission in Mali. Under the framework, an international force would support the Malian defence and security forces in operations to restore the territorial integrity of Mali.

There are, however, remaining questions about how the international and Malian forces would be led, sustained, trained, equipped and financed. Moreover, the division of tasks between the forces, command and control, civilian oversight over the Malian forces and timelines are issues that still need to be addressed.

While the operational aspects are being refined, we envisage that the very existence of the military option can provide useful and complementary leverage to the political process, which remains the priority option for Mali.

Should the Council decide to authorize the deployment of the African-led international support mission in Mali, any operations conducted by the force will need to be well planned, coordinated and implemented. Furthermore, if the effectiveness of the operations and their minimal adverse impact on the population are to be ensured, they must be carried out in strict compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law. The early deployment of human rights officers as part of a strengthened United Nations presence in Mali, as proposed by the Secretary-General, could provide an important capacity for monitoring such compliance and help to ensure accountability. Moreover, the Secretary-General's proposals that the Council request the African Union and the Malian authorities to use benchmarks in determining when military operations would commence, and consider requesting the African Union to report to it on the activities of the international support mission once it is established, would also be helpful in ensuring accountability.

As the Secretary-General has proposed, benchmarks for the commencement of military operations, could include, first, the demonstrated operational readiness of the international and Malian forces; secondly, positive developments in the peace process, including on the part of the leadership in Bamako; and thirdly, the effective training of the personnel of both forces on their obligations under international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. These benchmarks would help address important questions that are intended not to delay addressing Mali's security crisis but to make sure that any military intervention can be successful and in conformity with international standards.

Both the international support mission in Mali and the Malian forces would need the requisite capacities for carrying out operations against terrorist and affiliated groups in northern Mali. That will require the timely and well-coordinated provision of a significant amount of support by international partners, including general and specialized equipment, logistics and funding.

With respect to funding for the proposed force, the United Nations has a limited ability to deliver a support

package in the near term to a combat force. Such operations could be supported through contributions by Member States. Once their objectives have been achieved, the Council could consider the option of the United Nations providing a logistics package for stabilization operations undertaken by the force. Consideration could also be given to the deployment of a peacekeeping operation following the completion of combat operations. The United Nations, drawing on its comparative advantages and international experience, could also support planning in key areas that need to accompany or follow combat operations to ensure a progressive extension of State authority. It is vital that early preparations be undertaken for a stabilization phase so as to prevent a security and administrative vacuum as areas in northern Mali are recovered.

As members of the Council are aware, both the President of Benin, in his capacity as the Chairman of the African Union, and the President of the ECOWAS Commission have sent letters to the Secretary-General conveying their views on the report and expressing certain reservations with respect to the approach adopted by the United Nations concerning the authorization of an African-led international support mission for Mali. Both messages call for urgent action to be taken with respect to the authorization of the deployment of the African-led force to Mali.

The Secretary-General's position is clear. He shares the sense of urgency about the horrendous crisis facing Mali, and he believes, at the same time, that the international response must be multidimensional and well-conceived. With respect to the military option, his report makes clear that the strategic operational framework, which was endorsed by the African Union, provides a good basis for the Security Council to consider the African Union's request for its authorization of the mission under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The Secretary-General's report also encourages additional planning before the actual deployment of any such force.

The Malian people, the victims of this crisis, are, understandably, looking to the region and the international community for help. As the Secretary-General indicated in his report, Mali's complex crisis requires a multifaceted and integrated response in which the political, security, humanitarian, human rights and stabilization dimensions are well coordinated and mutually reinforcing, and whose challenges must be seen in the broader context of the Sahel region.

As a first step, international support should be focused on supporting the Malian authorities in conducting an inclusive national dialogue aimed at reaching a national consensus on a transitional road map that addresses the full return to constitutional order and the grievances of groups in the north.

Secondly, efforts to bring about a negotiated political settlement with armed groups that have disavowed ties to terrorist groups should continue in earnest. Finally, a well-conceived and executed military intervention in the north should be conducted as a last resort to address terrorist and criminal elements, and planning should be undertaken for stabilization efforts in recovered areas.

Finally, let me say that while there is, for obvious reasons, a strong focus at this time on the international response to the requests of Mali and the region, it bears underscoring that the Malians themselves need to be at the centre of any efforts to restore their democracy to health and fully recover their territory. The Malian leaders must shoulder their responsibilities and work together, inclusively, for the interests of the Malian people and the region. The international community must with urgency do all it can to assist.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Ms. Traoré (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, let me convey to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of the delegation of Mali on your country's assumption to the presidency of the Council for the month of December and to assure you of the full cooperation of our country, Mali, which is pleased to have such excellent relations with the Kingdom of Morocco. I should like also to reiterate to the Indian presidency my delegation's congratulations on the outstanding manner in which it guided the work of the Council last month.

The Government of Mali wishes to reaffirm its gratitude to the Secretary-General for the attention he has devoted and all of the efforts that he is undertaking to bring about a lasting resolution to the serious crisis that is currently facing Mali. We are also grateful to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), our broader family; the African Union; the European Union; the United Nations system as a whole; and all of Mali's bilateral and multilateral partners for their strong mobilization with respect to the issues facing Mali in its quest for peace, stability and development.

In September, the Government of Mali requested the adoption by the Security Council of a resolution authorizing, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the deployment of an international military force in order to assist the Malian army to recover and secure its territory. Following that request, the Council adopted resolution 2071 (2012) on 12 October, which, inter alia, requests the Secretary-General to submit to it a report. We are considering that report (S/2012/894) this morning.

The Government reiterates to the Secretary-General its gratitude for the outstanding manner in which the report was drafted, which reflects the great interest that the Secretary-General is taking in the situation in Mali. The Government of Mali has taken note of the report and remains convinced that following this consideration, the Security Council will authorize the deployment of an African-led international support mission for Mali in order to ease the suffering of the people who have been under occupation for nine months and to spare the subregion and even the rest of the world an even more serious disaster whose repercussions cannot be predicted.

The Government fully endorses the statements to be made shortly by the representatives of ECOWAS and the African Union. We participated in the process leading to the conclusions contained in those statements and share the views expressed therein.

We also take this opportunity to make a number of comments concerning points that the Government of Mali wishes to make following its reading of the report.

My delegation wishes first to underscore the urgency of deploying the force in northern Mali. In reading the report, we have understood that the Secretary-General does not really believe that the deployment is urgent. We say this because the daily plight of the people of Mali under occupation is sufficiently well known. It includes daily floggings and amputations. Only in Mali are citizens' limbs amputated under the pretext of the so-called implementation of sharia law. Other Islamic countries do not carry out such acts. There are summary executions. The Secretary-General recalls that child soldiers of all nationalities are being recruited to carry out jihad in northern Mali. There are stonings, pillaging and the destruction of cultural and historical sites and monuments that are categorized as UNESCO world heritage sites. The most basic human rights are continually violated by a hoard of terrorists and other

criminals in organized groups who are not even Malians. They are so firmly convinced of their conquest that we have heard that they have called for reinforcements. Infiltrations of terrorists and extremists from the north and from the south have also been reported regularly by the security forces. This painful and disturbing conclusion has led the Malian transition authorities to call for the deployment of the international force.

Since independence, the rebellion has always been dealt with by the Malian authorities and previous authorities in accordance with their resources and together with the neighbouring countries, in particular through dialogue. However, the rebellion's recent connection to terrorism requires us to change our stance. I take this opportunity to specify that the Government of Mali has requested international aid to drive out the terrorists, extremists and other organized criminals, who are most often foreigners and not Malian nationals. We have not asked for the international force to fight ethnic minorities. The Government wishes to assure the Council of that.

In addition, the Government of Mali would like to reassure the Council that the request for the deployment of the force is not aimed at destabilizing neighbouring countries. Our neighbours' security and stability and the excellent relations we enjoy with each of them are of the highest concern to us. That is why the Government continues to believe that the Security Council, given its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter, will act quickly to avert a catastrophic upheaval of security and the culture, cultural space and human rights in Mali and the region, which would entail serious and systematic violations of the most basic human rights. The force is sought to ensure that we have a certain amount of security in those spheres.

The deployment of the force is urgent; merely discussing it acts as a deterrent. We have noted a measure of calm since the meeting held in Bamako on 19 October, but it has been precarious and a certain reversal has since been observed. When it was announced that there could be no war before September 2013, the terrorists have stepped up their activities and sought reinforcements to wage jihad from Mali. Mali is on its way to becoming a breeding ground for terrorism in West Africa, Africa as a whole and throughout the entire world.

In his report, the Secretary-General rightfully raises questions about the financing, training, equipping

and relations between the different components of the force. We recall that all these issues have been ironed out in open discussion among military experts. Better yet, the strategic concept that was the outcome of those discussions is a consensus document. It is the result of the active and joint participation of all the parties involved: ECOWAS and West Africa, the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union, the core countries — Algeria, Mauritania, Niger and Mali — France, the United States, Canada and Germany. Participation was broad and the document presented is consensus-based.

We note the enthusiasm and commitment of the European Union, France and certain troop-contributing countries to supporting Mali in training, equipping and financing the force, in accordance with resolution 2071 (2012). I wish to convey to each one our gratitude. In our view, the Security Council could encourage and support this international mobilization by adopting a resolution authorizing the deployment of the force. All countries that want to intervene wish to do so within the framework of international legality.

In his report, the Secretary-General underscores the need for the ruling class of Mali to find lasting solutions to the recurring grievances of the Tuaregs and the northern communities. The Government of Mali would like to point out that the historical advancement of our people clearly demonstrates that our leaders have, since independence, always favoured negotiated solutions that are the outcome of dialogue and consultations, with the mediation of neighbouring countries, in order to resolve crises. Mali is known for its commitment to settling disputes by peaceful means because it is firmly attached to the ideals of dialogue and lasting peace and stability.

Drawing on this tradition of dialogue, since the outset of the current crisis in January the Malian authorities have continually reaffirmed their commitment to dialogue with those of our compatriots who are not terrorists or instruments of organized crime, and do not challenge the territorial integrity, national unity or secular nature of the Republic of Mali. In accordance with the commitment to dialogue with our fellow citizens who accept the conditions that I have just underscored, the Government will work tirelessly to set up a national negotiating commission in order to begin negotiations, with ECOWAS mediation.

Several days ago, the Government sent to Ouagadougou a delegation of mediators led by the

Minister for Foreign Affairs, as recalled by the Secretary-General, in order to begin direct dialogue with the Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad and Ansar Dine. We have received information with regard to the conclusion of that agreement. They are ready to withdraw.

The report tends to limit United Nations action to the option of negotiating at the expense of the requested intervention. The Government of Mali draws the attention of the Council to the shortcomings of that approach, which would not be sufficient to overcome the entrenched terrorists. Mali has always addressed this question through dialogue, but this time the nexus with organized terrorism calls for military intervention.

We note that the passages of the report portraying the Tuareg community as a marginalized minority in Mali do not reflect the reality on the ground. The Tuareg community represents barely 35 per cent of the total population of northern Mali and less than 4 per cent of the total population of the Republic. The census statistics confirm that there are 447,650 Tuareg out of more than 14 million inhabitants. I recall that this community does not support the rebellion; a few Tuareg have joined the rebellion, but not the Tuareg community as a whole.

Owing to travel constraints, not all members of my delegation were able to come to New York. However, the Vice-President of the Assembly of Mali is a Tuareg and has been a member of the National Assembly for more than 20 years. It is regrettable to note that that small minority — perhaps calling it a small minority is not quite appropriate, because a minority is already a small number — but that tiny minority, which claims the right to speak on behalf of all the communities of the north, is a condensation of people that are entire ethnic mix. The rebel Tuaregs are only a small minority.

It should be emphasized that in the past ten years, three of the four prime ministers who led the Government came from the north, and one of them was a Tuareg. Some institutions of the Republic, including the High Council of Communities, which is the equivalent of the Senate in some countries, are led by Tuaregs. Moreover, in accordance with the provisions of pacts and agreements signed to manage the rebellion, the Government adopted a policy of positive discrimination. That has led to representation of the Tuareg community in each governmental team that has been set up. For more than 10 years, there have been one or two Tuaregs in the Government.

The Government decided on full integration in the public service of young graduates from the north, whether Tuareg or of other ethnicity, without taking the national civil service examination. As members know, in many developing countries, entry into the civil service is governed by an examination. Positive discrimination has enabled citizens of the north to join the civil service without taking the examination.

The Government also decided to integrate 2,500 ex-combatants in the armed forces — the army, the police, the gendarmerie, the national guard, customs and the forest and wildlife service. Those young people have been integrated at the grade proposed to the Government by their movement. That is clear positive discrimination. If people from the south wanted to rebel, that would be a reason for them to do so, but they were understanding. Everyone in Mali, the Government and the people, wanted to resolve the situation in northern Mali and the Tuareg issue.

In addition, there is the reintegration of more than 9,000 ex-combatants in the implementation of the small development projects and programmes administered directly by the population of the north. Furthermore, Mali committed itself to a democratic process with State decentralization and devolvement, which provide the opportunity to all Mali citizens to actively participate in the development of their community.

With the support of some partners represented in this Chamber, the Government has established development programmes in the areas of road infrastructure to open up the country's interior. It has implemented agricultural, water, drinking water supply and grazing projects and the building of health-care centres and schools. A special characteristic of the north is that the schools and health-care centres are under the Tuareg communities. That is an example of positive discrimination.

As the Council can note, the Government benefits from that policy to assure the Security Council that the Tuareg community has never been marginalized. It is not marginalized and never will be. It certainly lives in an area abandoned to nature, namely, the Sahara. There are very intense development efforts. They cannot be matched by the efforts undertaken in the south, but the Government, gravely concerned about that, decided nationally and in a fully balanced way to implement a policy of positive discrimination.

The Government shares the concern of the Secretary-General regarding human rights in the context of deploying the force. We have just talked about that. The Government solemnly reaffirms its commitment to prevent human rights violations and to fight against impunity. In that connection, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his readiness to assist Mali in its capacity-building in that regard.

The Government also takes this opportunity to inform the Council that, apart from the forced displacement of populations, the crisis has already undermined access to education for more than 500,000 school-aged children, of whom 300,000 were already attending school before the crisis. Educational institutions and equipment have been damaged. The crisis has caused the displacement of 85 per cent of teachers and 10,000 pupils towards the south and 50,000 school-aged children to neighbouring countries. In other words, the population's fundamental rights have already been significantly violated.

The concern of the Secretary-General is well founded, and we share it. But we need to strike a balance. Between ensuring the rights of the populations in the north in times of war and those of the people whose rights are violated daily, we believe that it is out of step. The Government of Mali believes that the best way to protect human rights is to rapidly establish the conditions to enable the State of Mali to fully exercise its authority throughout its territory. The planned force must be quickly set up to that end.

The Government of National Unity of Mali established last August recognizes that a lasting settlement to the crisis necessarily means achieving a unified Mali leading class with regard to the major goals of restoring the country's full territorial integrity and of holding credible elections. The Under-Secretary-General mentioned that in his presentation. There will be national consultations in a few days, on 11, 12 and 13 December. By then, the road map will exist.

The transition Government has two basic goals, namely, restoring territorial integrity and convening elections for the transition so that legitimately elected authorities can administer the country. The road map will be shared during the consultations and will be finalized. A national negotiations committee will be established. Also, the process of organizing the elections has been started. The electoral list is being audited with the support and commitment of certain

partners. The Government itself is also worked to draw up a budget for the 2013 tax year.

On the Government's behalf, allow me to underscore the responsibilities of the Security Council to rapidly act for peace and security in Mali, the region, Africa and the world. That is indeed urgent, first, to ease the plight of the Malian population and also to prevent a similar, if not much more serious, situation for the people of the Sahel. Urgent action is also required in order to ensure that northern Mali does not become a permanent safe haven for terrorism and organized crime, which is now happening.

Today, the people of Mali are seriously affected but they hope that members of the Security Council will give positive attention to their Government's request for the deployment of the force. It is a matter of maintaining international peace and security, which is the primary task of the United Nations system.

On that note of hope, the Government of Mali requests that Council members, in the light of our remarks, consider deciding to deploy the mission and international force in northern Mali. It is an urgent matter for the security and the entire world.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Mr. Ouédraogo.

Mr. Ouédraogo (*spoke in French*): Allow me first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Council. I also wish to thank the Security Council for this opportunity to address it on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to affirm our commitment to finding a rapid solution to the crisis in Mali.

Before I go any further, allow me to pay a strong tribute to the Chairman of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, Mr. Alassane Ouattara; to the Chairperson of the African Union, Mr. Thomas Boni Yayi; and their colleagues, the ECOWAS Mediator for the Malian crisis, Mr. Blaise Compaoré, and the Associate Mediator, Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, for the solidarity they have steadfastly displayed towards the people of Mali and for their determination to resolve the institutional and security crises sweeping the country.

I also take this opportunity to commend the unstinting efforts of the Secretary-General to resolve the Malian crisis and to commend him for his comprehensive report (S/2012/894) on the current state

of events. The report comes at a critical phase and calls for concrete, positive steps to put an end to the suffering too long endured by the Malian people at the hands of terrorist groups that indulge in massive human rights violations before our eyes.

The Security Council, in adopting resolution 2056 (2012) in July, demonstrated the international community's political commitment to supporting the efforts of ECOWAS and the African Union to resolve the crisis in Mali. Another very important milestone was the Council's unanimous adoption on 12 October of resolution 2071 (2012), bespeaking the Security Council's readiness to follow up the request of ECOWAS and the African Union for the deployment of an international force to help re-establish control over the occupied areas of the northern Mali and to combat terrorism.

In the context of the widespread mobilization on Mali's behalf, the strategic concept, outlining a comprehensive and coordinated approach to settle the crisis in the country, was adopted on 19 October in Bamako and then endorsed by the African Union Peace and Security Council. Similarly, the coordinated operations concept for the deployment of the African-led international force was adopted by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government on 11 November and then ratified by the African Union after a series of broad consultations with regional and international military planners, including from the United Nations.

I emphasize that those significant documents, which were called for by the Council in resolution 2071 (2012) and have been delivered to the Secretary-General, were arrived at through a collaborative, inclusive process with the full support of the Malian authorities and all parties concerned: the African Union, ECOWAS, the United Nations, the European Union, the countries of the region, including Mali's nearest neighbours, as well as our multilateral and bilateral strategic partners. That testifies to the consensus enjoyed by those documents in the search for solutions to the Malian crisis.

The extreme urgency of the situation in northern Mali requires more than ever that the firm stance taken by the Council in resolution 2071 (2012) be maintained. It requires us to advance to a further, more assertive stage in implementing the initiatives taken on all levels, in keeping with the agreed strategies to end the crisis. With every day that passes, any retreat from our resolve entails the clear risk that the situation will deteriorate and the suffering of the affected population — who are

the victims, as the Council is aware, of grave human rights violations — will be exacerbated.

In the view of ECOWAS, the political dialogue — which should always enjoy pride of place in crisis resolution — must in Mali's case be combined with the military option if we are to help the country to regain its territorial integrity, dismantle the terrorist networks and restore State authority throughout its national territory. Non-intervention in northern Mali or any backing down from the urgent need to send a force could further aggravate the security and humanitarian situations, which are already greatly troubling. Notably, it could encourage the further entrenchment of terrorist and criminal groups, with the threat of dire consequences for regional and international security.

That is why, on the recommendation of the sixty-ninth ordinary session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers in Abidjan from 30 November to 2 December, and in accordance with the previous decisions taken at the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government, I ask the Council, upon consideration of the Secretary-General's report, to recognize the urgent need for a resolution authorizing the deployment of the African-led international support mission in Mali, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. I have also delivered to the Secretary-General, for the consideration of all members of the Council, the communiqué issued by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers on the Secretary-General's report, outlining our position, which enjoys the support of the African Union.

At this point, I would like to share with the Council the vision shared by ECOWAS and the African Union of the approach to be taken and the measures to be adopted in the days and weeks to come, to deliver a coherent response to the settlement of the Malian crisis.

First, the strategic concept for the international community's intervention in Mali follows the dual approach of engaging, on the one hand, in dialogue and negotiation with those armed groups that respect human rights and have already clearly cut their ties with terrorist groups, and on the other hand deploying military force against terrorist groups.

Secondly, we believe that the deployment of the international force is crucial to restoring Mali's sovereignty and territorial integrity. To that end, it is essential that the Council resolution authorizing deployment be adopted before the end of the year.

Thirdly, in support of our initiatives, ECOWAS and the African Union call for greater coordination of political and security efforts to strengthen national cohesion; organize credible, transparent, open elections meeting international standards; and conceive and implement a reform of the Malian armed forces.

Fourthly, we count on the involvement of the United Nations and its expert support for the international force expertise in matters of politics, human rights, peacekeeping and logistics.

The request that we reiterate here today has the full support of the African Union and the Malian Government. We expect the Council's response to be fully focused on ensuring that the efforts which have enjoyed unanimous regional and international support since the outbreak of the crisis will not be watered down and stripped of all their impact on the ground. The deployment will of course be funded by the countries of ECOWAS and the African Union and their strategic partners, including the United Nations. For that reason, once the resolution is adopted, a round table on the financing of the operation will be convened to identify the pledges already made.

A robust resolution of the Council is necessary. It is eagerly awaited by the people of Africa, especially those suffering in northern Mali. It will rescue and strengthen the political dialogue launched with the assistance and mediation of ECOWAS, and pave the way to a rapid resolution to the crisis in Mali.

In conclusion, please allow me to again thank all Council members and our bilateral and multilateral partners for their continuing support for Mali and for their assistance in the peacebuilding process and in restoring security in West Africa.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ouédraogo for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. António.

Mr. António: Let me start by conveying the apologies of Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, who would have loved to join this meeting, but could not attend due to other commitments on the continent. She has therefore instructed me to represent her here.

I wish also to salute the presence of Minister Traoré Rokiatou Guikine of Mali and Mr. Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo, President of the Commission of

the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

I congratulate Morocco on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December and thank the President for inviting the African Union (AU) to this very important meeting.

We are highly appreciative of the efforts of the Security Council regarding the situation in Mali and the support extended so far to the AU and ECOWAS. I would like in particular to highlight the adoption of resolutions 2056 (2012) and 2071 (2012) as a demonstration of the commitment of the Security Council and its members fully to shouldering their responsibilities on an issue that clearly and obviously threatens international peace and security, as underlined by the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/894) that was just introduced by Mr. Feltman, whom we also thank.

I also would like to reiterate the AU's appreciation to the Secretary-General for the invaluable contribution of the United Nations towards the elaboration of the strategic concept for the resolution of the crisis in Mali, as well as for its active involvement, including through experts dispatched to Bamako, in the process of developing the concept of operations for the deployment of the African-led international support mission in Mali.

As all Council members are aware, the situation in Mali is of utmost concern to ECOWAS, the countries of the region and the AU. It poses a serious threat to Mali, the region and far beyond, particularly in view of the entrenchment of terrorist and other criminal groups in the northern part of the country.

The situation also calls into question the basic principles of the AU and the larger international community. Let me highlight here respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Mali, the repudiation of the recourse to armed rebellion to further political claims, and the rejection of terrorism and criminal activities. Because those principles are so fundamental to the maintenance of peace, security and stability on the continent, we need to react swiftly and strongly against any attempt to undermine them.

Since the outbreak of the crisis in Mali, ECOWAS and the AU have exerted sustained efforts to address the situation, as demonstrated by the initiatives taken by the ECOWAS Chairman, President Alassane Ouattara, and its Mediator, President Blaise Compaoré; the encouragement to the Malian stakeholders to adopt

an inclusive road map on the conduct of the transition; and the planning for the deployment of an operation. The Chairperson of the AU Commission, Ms. Dlamini-Zuma, has appointed former President Pierre Buyoya the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel. He has since travelled to Mali and elsewhere in the region to further the strategic concept and related Peace and Security Council decisions. He is working in close coordination with the region and with international partners, in particular the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, Mr. Romano Prodi.

Both ECOWAS and the AU are certainly mindful of the complexity and multifaceted nature of the crisis facing Mali. They are equally mindful of the need to take into account the regional dimension in the broader context of the challenges facing the Sahelo-Saharan region. The strategic concept that I alluded to earlier aims precisely at providing an overall framework that can guide the efforts of the international community.

Our efforts revolve around three key components. The first is dialogue with the Malian armed groups willing to seek a peaceful response to any legitimate grievance they may have, within the strict framework of the principles articulated by ECOWAS, the AU and the United Nations, namely, respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Mali — which are not up for debate — the rejection of armed rebellion to further political claims, and the repudiation of terrorism and criminal activities. Second is the development by the Malian stakeholders of an inclusive road map to achieve the transition objectives, and third is the deployment of the international support mission to help the Malian authorities restore the country's unity and territorial integrity and dismantle the terrorist and other criminal networks active in the northern part of the country, including the strengthened capacity of the Malian defence and security forces.

Clearly, the deployment of the international support mission is a key component of the strategic concept. We strongly believe that the urgent establishment of the mission will go a long way in furthering our overall objective of facilitating the creation of the conditions necessary for a stable and democratic Malian State that responds to the needs of all its citizens, fully exercising its authority over its national territory, and effectively assuming its responsibilities in addressing regional security and other challenges.

In that respect, the AU notes that the report submitted by the Secretary-General stresses the need for further planning and preparation, while recognizing nonetheless that the concept of operations developed with the support of the United Nations provides a useful basis for considering the AU request to the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, to authorize AU member States to establish the international support mission for an initial period of one year, and to take all measures necessary to assist the Malian authorities in recovering the occupied regions of the north, in order to restore the unity and territorial integrity of Mali and reduce the threats posed by terrorists and affiliated groups, including transnational organized criminal networks. It is therefore our hope that the Security Council will authorize the deployment of the African-led international support mission in Mali without delay.

We view the political track regarding the transition in Mali, the negotiations with the Malian armed groups, and the deployment of the international support mission as mutually reinforcing. Any perception of a lack of decisiveness on any of those tracks may send the wrong message to the terrorist and criminal networks, as well as to the armed groups that are not committed to a negotiated solution, while prolonging the suffering of the civilian population and increasing the threat to regional and international peace and security.

The deployment and operations of the international support mission would require strong United Nations support. Experience in the Darfur region of the Sudan with the African Union Mission in the Sudan, and currently in Somalia with the African Union Mission in Somalia, has clearly shown the limitations of and constraints linked to support provided on a voluntary basis.

I would like therefore to echo the call made by the AU Peace and Security Council, in its communiqué of 13 November, for the establishment of a United Nations support package, funded through assessed contributions, to ensure sustained and predictable support to the mission. Equally important is the need to extend the required support to the Malian defence and security forces through the establishment of a dedicated trust fund.

Mali is at a crossroads. Time is of the essence. We need to act fast and send a clear and strong message on the resolve of the international community and its support for the African-led efforts. In particular,

and in line with the Peace and Security Council communiqué of 13 November, we call on this body to take the following steps: first, to extend full support to the strategic concept in all its components and to the efforts under way to ensure its effective and speedy implementation; secondly, to authorize the deployment of the international support mission as provided for in the harmonized concept of operations endorsed by the Peace and Security Council, it being understood that ECOWAS and the AU will continue, with the support of the United Nations and in collaboration with all stakeholders, to work on outstanding planning and operational issues; thirdly, to put in place a United Nations support package for the international support mission funded through assessed contributions; and fourthly and finally, to establish a trust fund to support the Malian defence and security forces, especially in view of the lead role expected of them in addressing the security challenges in their country.

The AU is committed to building a strong partnership with the United Nations and Mali. Indeed, it is only through joint efforts that we will be able to effectively support the Malian people and authorities as they strive to overcome the very difficult circumstances facing their country, and contribute to the promotion of lasting security, stability and development in the entire Sahel region.

At the AU, we have no doubt that, as in the past, we can count on the Security Council's commitment and continued support to Africa's efforts in Mali and elsewhere on the continent.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.