



ECHOES OF ECOWAS

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COMMUNIQUE OF THE ECOWAS CHAIRMAN ON MALI

The Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government expresses deep concern over the deteriorating situation in Mali, particularly the on-going attempt by terrorist occupation forces to capture Konna and progress southwards to positions held by the Malian Armed Forces.



President Ouattara

The Authority welcomes the UN Security Council Declaration of 10th January 2013 condemning the terrorist incursions and calling for rapid deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), in line with Security Council Resolution 2085.

The Authority thanks the Security Council Members and the French Government for their expeditious reaction aimed to stabilise the military situation in Mali.

The Authority commends the Malian Defence and Security forces for their efforts to repel the advances by the terrorists and hails the ECOWAS Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff for its exemplary mobilisation. The Chairman of Authority, after consultations with his peers and in conformity to Resolution 2085 of the UN Security Council, decides to authorise the immediate deployment of troops to Mali within the AFISMA framework, to assist the Malian Army in the defence of the Country's territorial integrity.

The Authority recalls its previous decisions on Mali and reaffirms its commitment to support the Malian Government in overcoming the security crisis. It shall hold responsible any individual or group threatening national cohesion and the decisions of ECOWAS and the African Union.

The Authority urges the Transitional Authority to expedite action on the establishment of an agency responsible for political dialogue with rebel groups which renounce terrorism and violence and recognise the territorial integrity and secularity of Mali.

ECOWAS, UN OFFICIALS DISCUSS SECURITY ISSUES IN WEST AFRICA

The President of the ECOWAS Commission, His Excellency Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to West Africa, Ambassador Said Djinnit, met at the Commission in Abuja on Monday, 14th January 2013, to review cooperation between their institutions, especially



(l-r); Ambassador Djinnit, President Ouédraogo with Commissioner Suleiman

the implementation of the UN Resolution 2085 on Mali.

The meeting also discussed talks on drug trafficking and organized crime, piracy and insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, security sector reforms in Guinea Bissau, counter-terrorism, and regional cooperation.

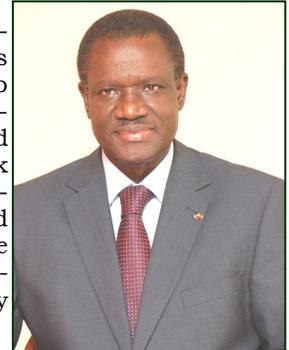
On Mali, the officials emphasized the need to accelerate the implementation of Resolution 2085 and the intensification of consultations among partners, including on the margins of the forth-coming high-level meetings of the African Union in Addis Ababa.

Ambassador Djinnit, who led a four-member delegation, commended ECOWAS for its excellent work which is bearing positive impacts on Africa and beyond, in spite of its many challenges, including limited resources.

Also at the meeting were the ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Mrs. Salamatu Hussaini Suleiman and other senior officials of the Commission. Resolution 2085 of the UNSC authorized the deployment of an African led force in Mali

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ECOWAS COMMISSION ON THE SITUATION IN MALI

The ECOWAS Commission deplores that despite the efforts made to find political solutions to the separatist crisis in Mali, the situation has seriously deteriorated over the past days with the attack perpetrated by rebel groups on Government positions, which resulted in the capture of Konna, when the ECOWAS Mediation invited the parties to a dialogue on 10th January 2013.



President Ouédraogo

In these grave circumstances, the ECOWAS Commission reiterates the Community's commitment to support the Government and People of Mali to preserve Mali's territorial integrity and combat terrorism.

The Commission welcomes UN Security Council Press Release of 10th January 2013 authorising immediate intervention in Mali to stabilise the situation. The Commission thanks the French Government for its initiatives to support Mali.

The Commission reaffirms the previous decisions of the Authority of Heads of State and Government on Mali. In conformity with these decisions and against the backdrop of Resolution 2085 of the UN Security Council, the Chairman of the Authority, in light of the urgency of the situation, has decided to authorise the immediate deployment of ECOWAS troops within the AFISMA framework. Measures will be taken to implement this decision.

The Commission reiterates its support and encouragement to the Malian Defence and Security Forces and commits to take all necessary measures to repel this attack. It commends the efforts of the ECOWAS Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff in the implementation of Resolution 2085 of the UN Security Council.

The Commission thanks the African Union, United Nations, partner countries and the International Community for their support and calls on all to actively and urgently contribute to efforts aimed at stabilising the situation.

It cautions against any attitude which hampers the transition process and the decisions of the International Community, which will be liable to targeted sanctions.

ECOWAS REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY

The ECOWAS Commission will continue to pursue policies and programmes that promote gender equality and private sector participation in its regional integration



Secretary General Bachelet with Vice President McIntosh

and enterprise development efforts in accordance with its mandate, the President of the Commission His Excellency Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo has affirmed.

To this end, the President told a Private Sector Interactive Session held at the Commission's Abuja Headquarters on Thursday 10th January 2013 that ECOWAS was propelling a project on Business Incubators for African Women Entrepreneurs with assistance from the NEPAD-Spanish Fund for Africa. This is aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs in agri-business, agro-processing and handicrafts as well as provision of financial, technical and organizational capacity building.

President Ouédraogo, represented by Vice-President Dr. Toga McIntosh at the Session held in honour of visiting Under-Secretary General and Executive Director, UN Women, Madam Michelle Bachelet, noted that "financing gender-sensitive and people-oriented development are key to ensuring sustainable development."

"We therefore have no choice, if we seek sustained economic, social and political development, but to recognise and adequately support the role of women in the process of nation-building," he said, expressing the hope that the interactive session themed "Financing Women Empowerment and Gender Equality," would yield significant dividends not only to business but also towards enhancing overall sustainable human development.

The President said that ECOWAS looked forward to an outcome "which can be used to enrich our collective resolve to promote Gender Equality and Women Empowerment within our region."

In her contribution during the session, Under-Secretary General Bachelet noted that in the next ten years Africa's labour force is expected to expand by 122 million, and if these men and women could participate as equals in the economy, Africa would enjoy more talent, creativity and growth than ever before.

She therefore urged leaders of industry, especially in the private sector, to help remove barriers to women's participation and to promote women to management positions based on merit while ensuring equal pay and benefits to women and men employees and with more flexible work options.

There should also be investment in training and capacity building for women employees to advance within the industry, with a safe environment and zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence in the workplace, the UN Women Chief added.

Madam Bachelet reiterated the UN

Women's support to women in Nigeria while hoping for a future of strong, stable and inclusive economic growth that will lift all segments of the population to the top of the world's economies.

The interactive session was attended among others, by Nigeria's Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development Hajjiya Zainab Maina, the Ekiti State First Lady Erelu Bisi Fayemi and representatives of private sector stakeholders including women groups.

Madam Bachelet is on a two-day official visit to Nigeria, part of a three-nation West African tour that had already taken her to Mali and Senegal.



Madam Bachelet, President Ouédraogo and Hajjiya Maina.

MALI COMMITS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RESOLUTION

The Government of Mali has reaffirmed its "determination to fulfil its obligations" under the UN Security Council Resolution 2085 authorising the deployment of an African-led International force in Mali (AFISMA) and other "relevant decisions" of ECOWAS and the African Union.

At the opening of the extraordinary session of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council (MSC) in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on 18th January 2013, the Minister of Malians Abroad and African Integration, Mr. Demba Traore also reiterated the determination of the Transitional Authorities to meet the threats posed by terrorist groups to the integrity of the country.

"Mali reiterates the call by ECOWAS and the African Union for the rapid deployment of AFISMA," he said, while thanking ECOWAS countries which have announced the contribution of troops and urged them to quickly deploy their contingents.

More than ever before, he said, the prompt implementation of Resolution 2085, particularly the components on AFISMA deployment and Donor Conference, have become a priority in the provision of support to the military operation underway to wipe out terrorism and restore Mali's territorial integrity.



Mr. Traore

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The Minister also welcomed the holding of MSC meeting in the wake of the renewed attacks and advance by the terrorist groups.

Minister Traore confirmed that the Government of Mali requested for and obtained the military assistance of France within the context of bilateral agreements between both countries and in line with the provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 2085 adopted in December 2012.

He also seized the opportunity to thank the French President and the Government and people of France for providing the necessary assistance for the restoration of Mali's territorial integrity and for peacekeeping and security within the region and the world.

The Minister also thanked ECOWAS Member States and Mali's bilateral and multilateral partners for their support and solidarity.

UN WOMEN CHIEF COMMENDS ECOWAS FOR GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The Under-Secretary General and Executive Director, UN Women, Madam Michelle Bachelet has commended ECOWAS for its role as "a driving force for gender equality and women's empowerment in West Africa."



(l-r) President Ouédraogo with Madam Bachelet

Speaking at a meeting in Abuja on Thursday 10th January 2013, with officials of the ECOWAS Commission led by its President, His Excellency Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo, Madam Bachelet, Chile's former President, also commended ECOWAS for recognising the importance of women's participation in peace-building, including in its Conflict Prevention Framework.

"ECOWAS can play a role in enabling women to make their full contribution to economic development, and to take their place alongside men as decision makers and leaders," the Under-Secretary General said, adding that women should also be put at the "centre of political dialogue, recovery and rebuilding."

Madam Bachelet shared with ECOWAS officials her concerns over the situation in Northern Mali and stressed that women's full participation is fundamental to building a



(l-r); Mrs. Ogwu, Mrs. Fayemi and Hajjya Maina

sustainable future in that country.

She updated the meeting on the work of UN Women, including its support for the im-



(l-r); Dr. Tarfa-Ugbe with Mrs. Suleiman

plementation of the UN Secretary-General's Seven Point Action plan on Gender-Responsive Peace-building in Liberia and Mali, as well as many other countries worldwide.

"While the Seven Point Action plan is focused on the

UN, UN Women encourages ECOWAS to adopt plans with similar concrete targets for allocating resources to women and girls in post-conflict contexts," Madam Bachelet canvassed.

In his response, President Ouédraogo congratulated the UN Women Chief on the quality of her leadership, which he described as exemplary and inspirational.

He briefed the meeting on the Commission's various programmes and activities promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Apart from having a full fledged directorate on Human Development and Gender, ECOWAS also has a Gender Development Centre based in Dakar, Senegal, whose operations feed into the wider regional initiatives for the empowerment and improvement of the lot of women in West Africa.

To achieve the organization's overarching goals of socio-economic development and regional integration, the President said that strong emphasis was being placed on the development of human capital, including the training of women to enable them play a meaningful role in the society.

Madam Bachelet is on a two-day official visit to Nigeria, part of a three-nation West African tour that had already taken her to Mali and Senegal.

She was accompanied on her visit to the ECOWAS Commission by Nigeria's Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Hajiya Zainab Maina, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Mr. George Ossi, the First Lady of Nigeria's Ekiti State, Erelu Bisi Fayemi and Nigeria's Permanent Representative to the UN, Prof. Joy Ogwu, among others.

On the Commission's delegation at the meeting, included Vice-President Dr. Toga McIntosh, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Mrs. Salamatu Hussaini Suleiman, and the Director, Gender and Child, Youth, Sports and Employment, Dr. Sintiki Tarfa Ugbe.

ECOWAS SETS UP WORKING GROUP FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON MALI

An ECOWAS Working Group set up to coordinate at the Commission's level, the implementation of the UN Security Council's Resolution 2085 on Mali met in Abuja on Tuesday 8th January 2012, to strategize on the implementa-

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tion of the 20th December 2012 Resolution endorsing the deployment of an African-led force AFISMA, under Chapter VII for the resolution of the political and security crises in Mali.

Inaugurating the multi-sectoral group made up of represent-

atives of the Commission's directorates, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Mrs. Salamatu Hussaini Suleiman emphasized that one of the Commission's key tasks this year, is the restoration of peace and democracy to Mali, working with the international community and partners.

She therefore charged members of the Working Group to come up with a blueprint to be shared with partners at a forthcoming meeting, to ensure that AFISMA does not only succeed, but also enjoys the full support of Malians and the international community.

The Commissioner commended the international community and partners, especially the UN, the African Union and the European Union for their tremendous support to the regional initiative in seeking solution to the crisis in Mali, and called for the sustenance of the support until the restoration of peace and the country's territorial integrity.

In his presentation which was also attended by the US, UK and EU Military Liaison Officers/Advisers to ECOWAS, the Director of Political Affairs Dr. Abdel-Fatau Musah, briefed the Working Group on the Political Situation in Mali and the Implications of the UN Security Council Resolution 2085 for the ECOWAS Region.

This was followed by the presentation by the Chief of Staff, ECOWAS Standby Force, General Muhammed Lai, which dwelt on the key requirements of Resolution 2085, as well as the architecture and the needs of AFISMA and the Mali Defence and Security Force, including training and logistics support.

The Acting Director of Communication, Mr. Sunny Ugoh presented a proposed Communication Strategy for the realization AFISMA objectives, especially the positive engagement of the media and engendering local and international support for the mission.



Dr. Abdel-Fatau

The Working Group also discussed the proposed financial cost of AFISMA as well as envisaged support for the Malian Defence and Security Force, and particularly the need for international logistic and financial support.

The meeting held at the Operations Room of the Directorate of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, and

Chaired by Commissioner Suleiman, was attended by representatives of the Commission's Directorates of Early Warning, Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Administration and Finance, Human Resources, Human Development and Gender, Legal, Communication and the ECOWAS Peace Fund, among others.

ECOWAS LAUDS NIGERIAN ARMED FORCES FOR REGIONAL PEACE

The President of the ECOWAS Commission, His Excellency Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo, has commended members of the Nigerian Armed Forces for their immense contribution to peace and stability in the region.

"On behalf of our Community Institutions and myself, I want to pay a special tribute to the Nigerian Armed Forces for their support to ECOWAS' peace-keeping efforts through the then ECOMOG, and now in Guinea Bissau and the proposed peace mission in Mali," he told a delegation that visited him on Wednesday, 9th January 2012, as part of the Nigerian Armed Forces Remembrance Day Celebration.

President Ouédraogo also paid tribute to Nigeria's fallen military heroes and expressed solitary with their families. He equally thanked the Nigerian Legion for the services being rendered by its members to the ECOWAS Commission and other Community Institutions based in country.

The leader of the delegation, Major-General Salihu Uba, Director, Veteran Affairs Division of



(l-r); Brig. Gen. UBA, President Ouédraogo, Col. Galya with Commander Sogbesan

the Ministry of Defence, who later decorated the ECOWAS Chief with the 2013 Nigerian Armed Forces emblem, expressed his gratitude to ECOWAS for supporting the legionnaires.

He highlighted the importance of the Armed Forces Remembrance Day, marked on 15th January annually to acknowledge the services of the Nigerian Armed Forces and in honour of the departed military heroes.

Major-General Uba was accompanied on the visit to the Commission by the National Chairman, Nigerian Legion, Colonel Micah Gayya (rtd) and Commander Yinka Sogbesan, a Staff Officer in the Ministry of Defence.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



"To run away from the stings of the honeybees, you must abandon the honey."

..... Cameroon.....

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