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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
544TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
18 SEPTEMBER 2015

PSC/PR/COMM.2(DXLIV)

COMMUNIQUÉ

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 544th meeting held on 18 September 2015, adopted the following decision on the situation in Mali and the Sahel region in general:

Council,

- 1. Takes note** of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the situation in Mali [PSC/PR/2.(DXLIV)] and the efforts made by the AU in the area of peace and security in the Sahelo-Saharan region. Council **also takes note** of the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Mali to the AU, as well as by the representatives of the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) Secretariat and the following permanent members of the UN Security Council: France, United Kingdom and United States of America;
- 2. Reiterates** its commitment to the respect of the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Mali, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the AU Constitutive Act;
- 3. Recalls** its previous communiqués and press statements on the situation in Mali and the Sahelo-Saharan region, including press statement PSC/BR.(DXIII) adopted at its 513th meeting, held on 3 June 2015;
- 4. Reiterates its full support** to the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers Process, signed by the Government of the Republic of Mali, the Movements of the Algiers Platform and the Mediation led by Algeria, *Chef de file*, and comprising the neighboring countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria), international organizations (UN, AU, Economic Community of West African States - ECOWAS, EU and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation - OIC), in Bamako, on 15 May 2015, as well as by the Coordination of the Movements of Azawad (CMA), also in Bamako, on 20 June 2015. Council **reiterates its appreciation** to President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita for his continuous commitment to peace and reconciliation in Mali;
- 5. Stresses once again** that the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation is a balanced document that takes into account the legitimate concerns of all the parties, based on the respect of the unity and territorial integrity of Mali, as well as of the secular nature and the republican form of the State. Council **further stresses** that the effective implementation of the Agreement will make it possible to resolve, in a lasting manner, the crises that have regularly affected the northern part of Mali and to further isolate the terrorist and criminal elements present in this part of the country;

6. **Welcomes** the establishment of the Follow-up Committee of the Agreement (CSA) and the efforts made by Algeria and the other members of the CSA to facilitate the implementation process of the Agreement and strict compliance by the parties with their commitments. Council **notes with satisfaction** that the CSA has already met three times and has established its technical sub-committees in charge of political and institutional matters, defense and security, development, as well as on justice, reconciliation and humanitarian issues. Council **urges** the CSA to persevere in its efforts, including by adopting, as quickly as possible, the detailed calendar for the implementation of the Agreement;

7. **Expresses its deep concern** about the difficulties facing the launching of the implementation process of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, in particular as a result of the incidents which occurred in mid-August 2015 in Anefis, in the region of Kidal, with the clashes opposing the Movements of the Platform and the CMA. Council **strongly condemns** those clashes, which constitute a flagrant violation of the Agreement. Council **takes note** of the withdrawal of the Movements of the Platform from this locality and **requests** the UN Multinational Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to ensure that the modalities agreed upon with regard to this withdrawal are scrupulously respected;

8. **Demands** that all the parties concerned scrupulously honour the commitments made and **reiterates its determination** to impose sanctions against all those who impede the implementation of the Agreement and to seek, in this regard, the support of the UN Security Council and other members of the international community;

9. **Urges** the international community to provide all the necessary support to the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, including the mobilization of the necessary financial resources and technical support for the implementation of the envisaged development programs for northern Mali. Council **also appeals** for the mobilization of the necessary funds to ensure the proper functioning of the CSA and its sub-committees;

10. **Notes with concern** the increase in terrorist and criminal attacks in northern Mali against the Malian defense and security forces, the international forces (MINUSMA and *Operation Barkhane*) and the civilian population, as well as their spread to the central and southern parts of the country. Council **strongly condemns** these attacks and **reiterates its support** for the efforts to neutralize the terrorist and criminal groups. Council **particularly congratulates** MINUSMA on the remarkable work it is doing on the ground, **reiterates its full support** to the Mission and **expresses its appreciation** to the Troop and Police Contributing Countries for the huge sacrifices made in the service of peace, security and reconciliation in Mali;

11. **Further notes with concern** that the increase in the number of attacks in northern Mali has led to further displacements of populations and has contributed to delaying the return of refugees. Council **notes** the difficult humanitarian situation in northern Mali, including shortage

of water, which affects both people and livestock, as well as the high rates of acute and severe malnutrition in this part of the country. Council **urgently appeals** to the international community as a whole for the mobilization of the necessary financial resources to meet the needs of the affected people, noting in this regard that, as of 5 August 2015, only 33% of the required funds had been mobilized. Council **expresses appreciation** to the neighboring countries hosting Malian refugees for their generosity;

12. **Stresses** the importance of strengthening the capacity of the Malian defense and security forces, particularly with regard to equipment and training, to enable them to effectively contribute to the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime and to take over, in due course, from the international forces. Council **commends** the work of the EU Training Mission (EUTM) and **urges** the EU to enhance its support through the program “Train and Equip”. Council **calls on** Member States to contribute actively to the defense and security sector reform provided for in the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali;

13. **Welcomes** the efforts made by the Commission and the countries of the region, within the framework of the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region. In this regard, Council **welcomes** the Conclusions of the meeting of Chiefs of Defense Staff and Ministers of Defense of the member countries of the Nouakchott Process, held in Bamako, from 2 to 4 September 2015. Council **fully supports** the efforts to enhance operational border cooperation, particularly through the systematization of joint patrols and the establishment of mixed units involving military contingents. Council **takes note with satisfaction** of the Algerian proposal on the establishment in Tessalit, northern Mali, of a regional training and familiarization center for combat in the desert, in support of the member countries of the Nouakchott Process;

14. **Takes note** of the measures proposed for the possible establishment of an intervention force in northern Mali to combat terrorist and criminal groups, and **looks forward** to the submission, by the Commission, following the mission to assess the situation and the convening of a meeting of experts to develop a concept of operation, as agreed in Bamako, of a detailed report on the issue, to enable it take the necessary decisions and inform the UN Security Council;

15. **Fully supports** the measures agreed upon in Bamako to contribute to the strengthening of MINUSMA, including the generation of the equipment required for the African contingents participating in the Mission, the reciprocal secondment of liaison officers, the opening of alternative land supply routes, as well as the exchange of information and intelligence;

16. **Reiterates the AU’s full support** to the efforts of the member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin to completely neutralize the terrorist group Boko Haram, including through the effective operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). Council **encourages** the Commission to continue to work with the LCBC to this end, as

part of the follow-up to communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CDLXXXIX)-Rev. 1, adopted at its 489th meeting held on 3 March 2015. In this regard and in order to enhance the AU's support, Council **endorses** the recommendation contained in the report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the adjustment of the mandate of the AU Liaison Office in Chad, to include therein coordination with the LCBC as regards the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group, as well as contribution to the follow-up of the implementation of the Nouakchott Process, in addition to its responsibilities of monitoring the impact of the situation in the Darfur region of Sudan on Chad and the efforts of that country to assist in the resolution of this crisis ;

17. **Welcomes** the efforts made by the Commission and the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL) towards the implementation of the AU Strategy for the Sahel, as adopted at its 449th meeting held on 11 August 2014 [communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CDXLIX)], including the planned holding, by the end of this year, by MISAHEL and the Algerian Government, of a seminar on development initiatives in the Sahel region. Council **encourages** MISAHEL to pursue its efforts and to accelerate the implementation process of the Strategy. Council **also welcomes** the support that MISAHEL, jointly with the Office of the UN Special Envoy for the Sahel Region, extends to the Ministerial Coordination Platform, set up by the countries of the region in November 2013;

18. **Stresses** the importance of strengthening the MISAHEL and the mobilization of the necessary resources needed for the Mission to discharge its mandate to support the peace and reconciliation process in Mali, coordinate the follow-up of the Nouakchott Process and the implementation of the AU Strategy for the Sahel. Council **urges** the Member States and bilateral and multilateral partners, including the EU, within the framework of the African Peace Facility, to provide the necessary support to this Mission;

19. **Requests** the Commission to submit regular reports on the implementation of the peace and reconciliation process in Mali, as well as the AU Strategy for the Sahel;

20. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the situation.