



**MISSION PERMANENTE DU NIGER
AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES**

417 EAST 50TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10022

Tél: (212)421-3260/61/86 Fax: (212)753-6931

Email: nigermission@ymail.com

**Draft statement by H.E. Mr. Abdou A Barry, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Niger to the United Nations,
On behalf of A3 and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

Security Council Briefing on UNOWAS

New York, 09 July 2020

Mr. President,

I have the honor to make this statement on behalf of the A3+1, namely South Africa, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Niger.

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, for his insightful briefing and for his dedication to promote dialogue and sustained commitment to stabilizing the situation in the region.

I also commend Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, whose relevant remarks, testifies to her commitment to raising awareness on the adverse effects of climate change, particularly in a region already facing several challenges.

Mr. President,

2020 is a year in which several elections were held under normal conditions, despite the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these elections, such as in Mali, led to the emergence of women, many of whom were elected to the National Assembly.

The A3+1 welcome this trend, which consolidates the basis of democracy and the rule of law, all of which lays the foundations for a more consensual and peaceful management of power.

We commend the key role played by the Special Representative of the Secretary General and the effective efforts in advocating for preventive diplomacy, through their good offices, without which many crisis situations could have degenerated.

In this regard, the strengthening of democratic institutions, through the promotion of dialogue between political actors, advocacy for the promotion of peace and peaceful coexistence between segments of society and communities, are all actions to be put to the credit of the UNOWAS Office.

We encourage UNOWAS to continue with these efforts, especially as the sub-region prepares for general elections that are scheduled to take place in five countries, some of them in a tense environment.

Through good cooperation with ECOWAS, whose Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance is essential, UNOWAS has to help ensure that all these planned elections take place in calm and in a stable environment, especially in view of the difficult security context and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. President,

In addition to its traditional mandate, the UNOWAS Office will need to devote even more efforts to helping countries deal with what has now become the top priority, that of the fight against Armed Terrorist Groups, whose actions spare neither the Armed Forces of the countries, the civilian populations, UN Peacekeeping and international forces present in the region.

These terrorist groups, which fuel inter-communal tensions, are forcing thousands of people, mostly women and children, to flee their homes and livelihoods.

In the Sahel, a region where climate change, armed conflict and fragile health systems present challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating an already disastrous situation that has made populations particularly vulnerable to disease and hunger and further risks reversing the hard earned progress that has been made on many fronts including economic growth, poverty reduction and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. According to UN Agencies, 3.5 million people are expected to face acute to severe food insecurity; 3.1 million are internally displaced persons, returnees and people at risk of statelessness. We commend the initiatives taken by ECOWAS in mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

Faced with such a situation, the A3+1 believe that only a comprehensive approach, which addresses the root causes of terrorism and inter-communal violence through poverty alleviation and investment in human development, including in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are the most appropriate strategies to reverse this most worrying trend. We also believe that a strong emphasis on more community level interventions such as inter-communal dialogues to address inter-communal violence is vital, therefore we welcome the convening and the outcomes of the workshop on good practices in preventing and resolving farmer-herder conflicts organised by UNOWAS and ECOWAS, which we believe is a positive initiative to address inter-communal violence.

The A3+1 commend, in this regard, the action taken by some countries to strengthen the participation of women and young people in the implementation of national strategies for peace, security, development and the fight against COVID-19. These positive developments will contribute significantly to broader national ownership and meaningful participation by all populations in peacebuilding activities in their respective countries.

Mr. President,

The A3 + 1 remains deeply concerned regarding persistent challenges of drug trafficking, organized crime and maritime piracy, through which terrorist groups find the means to finance their criminal activities.

In this regard, we commend the excellent work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in strengthening the interception capacities of States in the region, which has led to significant drug seizures in Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Mali, as well as to the arrest and conviction of those involved in such crimes.

In addition to the above-mentioned pressing challenges, the A3+1 believe that UNOWAS should, through its coordination role, assist the countries of the subregion in addressing the cumulative effects of insecurity, the impact of climate change and the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It should support the measures taken by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government, who have already put in place a response plan for the pandemic, taking into account the fight against the spread of the disease and the post-pandemic economic recovery.

We welcome the collaboration efforts between ECOWAS, the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the AU towards realising the deployment of 3 000 troops of the African Standby Force to the Sahel to further combat terrorism.

It is time to re-double efforts to combat insecurity and stabilize the sub-region, at the military level through MINUSMA, the G5-Sahel forces, MNTJF and those of partner States. We hope that this will be accompanied

by substantial funding that could enable the implementation of development actions for the benefit of the people of this vast area.

The multiple strategies for the Sahel and other development plans should cease to be mere slogans and become real levers for the mobilization of financial resources, which West Africa and its Member States so badly need.

We hope that the international community will fulfill its commitments to support the region to extricate itself from the current situation, including by disbursing pledges made to the region, as substantial funding is needed to enable the implementation of development actions for the benefit of the people of this vast area.

I thank you.