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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Abdou ABARRY,
Permanent Representative of Niger to the United Nations
on behalf of A3 and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on Mali**

New York, 13 January 2020

Mr. President,

1. On behalf of the A3 + 1, namely Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Niger, I would like to address a vibrant tribute to Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary General in Mali, Head of MINUSMA for the quality of its presentation as well as for the personal efforts he deploys for the lasting stabilization of Mali.
2. After almost four months since the installation of the transitional authorities, the time has come to take a retrospective look at what has been done and what remains to be done in this sister country which, it is no exaggeration to say that the transition authorities have improved the political climate which, not so long ago, was of great concern to us.

Two days ago, during the briefing on West Africa and the Sahel, the special representative of the Secretary general, head of the United Nations office for West Africa and the Sahel, had presented without complacency, the situation in the region made of hope, in terms of political processes and strong concerns regarding the security situation.

The progress made, it should be said, has to be put to the credit of countries which organized peaceful elections but also of institutions such as ECOWAS and UNOWAS which supported them.

With regard to Mali in particular, on behalf of the A3 + 1, I would like to salute the efforts made by the authorities of the Transition in the implementation of the Peace Agreement and in the process of preparing the organization of the elections. which will mark the return of the country to a normal constitutional order.

3. The A3 + 1 also welcomes:
 - the completion of the establishment of the organs of the Transition;
 - The signing of the updated Roadmap of priority actions for the implementation of the Agreement, on December 18, 2020, by parties to the Agreement;
 - The setting of dates for the revision of the constitution, the re-examination of local authorities' texts, the territorial police, the planned clarification of the concept of "reconstituted defense and security forces"
 - Measures taken and those planned within the framework of the development zone of the northern regions of Mali;
 - Strong progress in the fight against impunity as well as the role of the G5 Sahel and its Joint Force.

4. On behalf of the A3 + 1, I would like to thank the European Union and its 2 member states for the valuable support they provide to the implementation of the compliance framework on human rights, through the Office of the High Commissioner for United Nations Human Rights, as well as for its “additional support”. The provision of the Joint Force, since June 3, 2020, of a Command Post in Bamako, is another achievement that we welcome, given its importance.
5. We salute the mediation efforts deployed by ECOWAS and the G5-Sahel countries and partners, whose commitment to and solidarity will continue to be invaluable in this crucial transitional period in Mali. This certainly helped to avoid a dangerous escalation of the situation and proves the relevance of "African solutions to African problems"
6. The A3 + 1 also welcomes the efforts made by the new transitional authorities in the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation. The resumption of the activities of the Comité du Suivi de l'Accord, marked by an increase in the participation of women is encouraging, as is the signing, on December 18 2020, by the parties to the Agreement, of the updated Roadmap of priority actions for its implementation.
7. The recent activities of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission and the Specialized Judicial Pole is a testimony to the fight against impunity.
8. In order to prevent a resurgence of the crisis, this transitional phase that Mali is going through will require a holistic and multidimensional approach.

Mr. President,

9. In this crucial phase of its Transition, Mali needs the support of all so that the progress that I just mentioned does not rescind.
10. As advocated by the new authorities, everything should be done for the next elections to be free, transparent and inclusive, given that in recent years, electoral disputes have regularly been at the root of the crises that have severely shaken Mali.

We hope that the recent visit to Mali of Mr. Goodluck Jonathan, High Representative of ECOWAS for Mali, will help pave the way for the organization of these elections.

Undoubtedly, the ECOWAS Summit, scheduled to take place in Abuja next February, will focus on supporting the transition in Mali.

11. We also commend their endeavor of Malian authorities to revitalize the Malian army so that it can best ensure its regalian role of defense of the sovereignty and integrity of

Malian territory. The Malian army is already winning battles against the forces of evil. It participates in all joint operations with its allies.

Mr. President,

12. I would also like, on behalf of the A3 + 1, to commend the important efforts that MINUSMA continues to deploy, and to deplore the loss of human lives in its ranks either because of cowardly attacks by armed terrorist groups or because of the COVID 19 pandemic, whose second wave promises to be even more worrying for states in the region.

In this regard, countering terrorism and violent extremism must remain a priority, not only for Mali but across Africa, where terrorism trends are a big concern. In particular, the use of IEDs on Main Supply routes is worrying. The A3+1 therefore counts on the continued support of the Security Council to support the national authorities, to ensure that gains are not lost to extremist elements. It is against this backdrop, that we support the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and request that it continues to receive adequate assistance, especially financially, much needed in order to carry out effectively its tasks and mandate.

13. We welcome the decisive support of MINUSMA in the framework of the stabilization and the gradual restoration of State authority in the Center and in the North of Mali. The same goes for its decisive support towards the redeployment of the reconstituted units despite residual challenges.

14. the A3+1 believe that, like the socio-economic program of non-integrated combatants, implemented with the support of MINUSMA and the World Bank, the DDR program should be structured in such a way as to make the army a major player in development. To this end, the training that soldiers and integrated former combatants receive should go beyond the sole security aspect. We are convinced that additional skills in the field of civil engineering, agriculture and animal husbandry will enable these former combatants to make an effective contribution to the recovery of the affected areas and to the building of a Mali of prosperity, peace and justice.

15.

16. In addition, the A3 + 1 is deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation which has been further exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. We commend bilateral and multilateral partners for stepping up efforts to address humanitarian needs. Given the ongoing pandemic, deteriorating security situation and tense political context, assistance to vulnerable populations, in particular, women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, must remain unhindered and commensurate with their needs.

It is in this light that we salute the mediation and humanitarian aid actions of MINUSMA which have facilitated, in several localities, access to humanitarian assistance, but above all the de-escalation of violence between communities. We welcome the easing of tensions linked to the management of the municipality of Aguelhok, following the recent Agreement of January 7 and 8, 2021, in Anéfis, between the leaders of the ex-rebels of the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) and the June 14 Platform.

17. In this regard, Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Niger reiterate their call to devote greater attention to the destabilizing phenomenon of inter-communal conflicts, through coordinated action which could consist of establishing a Joint G5 Sahel / UN Project, with a view to tackle the root causes and prevent the recurrence of such conflicts.

Mr. President,

18. On this day marking one year, since the Pau summit which was held on January 13, 2020, the situation in Mali and in the sub-region continues to be a source of grave concern, even though, on the one hand, the counter-terrorism operations of the G5 Sahel Joint Force have significantly reduced the capacity of armed terrorist groups to cause harm in the central Sahel, as indicated in the latest report of the Secretary General on the G5 Sahel. Evidently, the asymmetrical nature of the attacks that we are experiencing, including those that recently occurred in Niger and Nigeria, imposes on us an increased and permanent vigilance.
19. While appreciating the support of other partners and MINUSMA to the Joint Force, the shortcomings of the support mechanism listed in the Secretary-General's recent assessments call for a readjustment of our intervention strategies in the Sahel.
20. It is the A3+1's view that the next renewal of MINUSMA's mandate should be an opportunity to withdraw the additional task of supporting the Joint Force bestowed by resolution 2391 (2017), in order to allow it to better focus on its strategic priorities, given the current context. In return, a United Nations support office dedicated to the Force should be created. Only then can the joint force be capable of fully fulfilling what it was set out to do.

Mr. President,

21. To conclude, and as I said at the beginning of my speech, it is time to take stock in order to assess and adjust our actions. We must rethink and harmonize our intervention strategies in order to allow Malians to be the major players in the stabilization of their country.

I THANK YOU !