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**Statement by Mr Aougui NIANDOU,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Niger to the UN, on behalf
of the A3+1, namely, Kenya, Niger, Tunisia, and Saint Vincent
and the Grenadines
on the situation in Mali**

New York, April 6, 2021

Mr. President,

1. At the outset of my remarks, I would like, on behalf of the A3+1, namely, Kenya, Niger, Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to thank USG Jean-Pierre LaCroix for his presentation and to pay a vibrant tribute to Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his efforts in creating the conditions to the return of peace in Mali, which, now 12 months from the end of the transition period, is at the crossroads of its long-awaited stabilization.
2. We congratulate Mr. El Ghassim Wane on his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MINUSMA. To carry out his new mission successfully, Mr. Wane will need a threefold support in the months to come: support from the population, support from the Malian authorities, and finally support from the international community.
3. With this in mind, Mr. President, allow me to touch upon the following key points:
4. **1) On the political front,** the A3+1 welcome the efforts and the willingness shown by the transitional authorities to appease the political tension that preceded the events of August 2020. The recent meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee remains an achievement to be consolidated, as is the fight against impunity in the center of the country.
5. With 12 months to go before the end of the transition, all Malian stakeholders need to listen to each other and agree on the priorities of the moment, particularly in terms of constitutional, institutional and electoral reforms, which are the foundations of democracy. The participation of Women and Youth must be encouraged. In this regard, we welcome the launch by the government of consultations to identify citizens' expectations for the new constitution.
6. As for the international community and MINUSMA, we expect them to continue to play a constructive role, providing valuable political, logistical and financial support.
7. We call on the government to continue to combat intercommunal violence by strengthening its actions to restore peaceful relations between communities and by effectively punishing those who interfere with the implementation of the Peace Agreement.
8. With regard to the economy, it is important to note that peace also feeds on development. To this end, we call on Mali's development partners to resume the aid that has been suspended since the last coup d'état, to enable the country to better cope with the multiple and multifaceted crises that risk exacerbating the economic, social, health, humanitarian and security situation.
9. Mali is at crossroads, as I said earlier. The Peacebuilding Commission should at this point, play a more prominent role in its stabilization. The implementation of direct impact and replicable projects at the local level will help consolidate the gains of stabilization.
10. **2) On the security front,** we welcome the progress achieved so far and encourage the effective return of the national armed forces and the administration throughout the country.

To achieve this, the redeployment and effective use of the reconstituted army units in the North and the establishment of the territorial police are equally essential.

11. The rise in terrorism, proliferation of arms and extremist ideology is of great concern. It is for this reason, we emphasize that the situation in Libya (basis of that of insecurity in the Sahel) calls for a coordinated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration programme, in the region, guiding the withdrawal of foreign fighters and preventing their return from becoming another concern for the governments.

We urge the United Nations to ensure these DDR programmes are carried out in cooperation and coordination with the neighboring States and the African Union to ensure their effectiveness.

12. We reiterate that any death is one too many. The recent loss of life among MINUSMA, the latest, civilians (Nigerien, Malian, and Burkinabe), and national, regional, and international armed forces is a reminder that the context remains quite worrisome and that we are far from having reached the objectives that would allow us to consider withdrawing or reducing the size of MINUSMA.

We condemn in the strongest terms the latest attack against MINUSMA which caused the death of four peacekeepers from the Chadian Contingent and present our deepest condolences to their families and the Government of Chad.

13. The A3+1 reiterates the importance of MINUSMA having the necessary capacities to fulfil its mandate and promote the safety and security of the United Nations peacekeepers, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2531 (2020).
14. MINUSMA should be stronger and more robust as the integrity of our territories continues to be significantly threatened by terrorist acts of rare cruelty.
15. We welcome the strengthening of the Joint Force's operational capabilities through the deployment of the 8th infantry battalion of 1,200 additional Chadians in the Central zone.
16. In the long term, however, the operationalization of this new battalion will require the active and sustained mobilization of all partners present in the theater, including the United Nations.
17. The A3+1 strongly reiterate that the next renewal of MINUSMA's mandate must have two major outcomes: (1) the readjustment of MINUSMA mandate in the view of providing a holistic support to the transition and (2) the withdrawal of the tasks of supporting the Joint Force, in order for it to better focus on its strategic priorities.
18. To that effect, we have the intention, hopefully with the support of the entire Security Council, to request the Secretary General to indicate, to us by the end of May 2021, through a White Note, the modalities and needs for the creation of a Support Office dedicated to the Joint

Force, which we firmly believe would be more appropriate than the Tripartite Technical Arrangement, no longer corresponding to the current context.

19. On the basis of the White Note and the high sense of responsibility of all Council members, which we count on, we will introduce, in June 2021, a consensual draft resolution creating the afore-mentioned Support Office.
20. In conclusion, the A3+1 reaffirms the importance for the respect human rights and international humanitarian law. The noble fight against the forces of evil that we are waging as national, regional and international armed forces, demands an equal accountability with regards to our acts, our actions and our attitudes in Mali and in the Sahel where this asymmetric warfare has put armies to the test, from the most to the least equipped.
21. **Thank you.**