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DONORS' CONFERENCE ON MALI

ADDIS ABABA, 29 JANUARY 2013

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION

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Excellences,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you all to this important Donors' Conference. I thank you most sincerely for your positive response to our invitation despite the short notice.

We are gathered here to express our solidarity with the Republic of Mali and its people. We are gathered here to show our unity of purpose and the resolve of the international community to address the situation in Mali with the urgency it so requires. We are also here to sustain the growing international momentum generated by the crisis in Mali.

We all know the gravity of the crisis facing Mali. The situation is characterized by the entrenchment of armed, terrorist and criminal groups that have committed serious human rights violations against civilian populations, and destroyed several monuments of high historical, cultural and religious significance. This is a situation that requires a swift and effective international response, for it threatens not only Mali and the region, but also the rest of the continent and beyond.

At stake are two fundamental principles of the AU, if not the whole international community, namely the principles of respect for national unity and territorial integrity of Member States, and the principle against the use of terrorism and armed violence to advance political objectives. What is going on in Mali is of interest to all Member States of the AU. It is also of interest to other members of the international community.

As we meet here, we are very much encouraged by the show of solidarity that various actors have displayed over the last few months and weeks with the people of Mali. Today's gathering is a clear illustration of both the increasing mobilization of the international community as a whole and its solidarity with Mali.

It is only fitting for me to express my gratitude, and that of the Commission, to the ECOWAS Member States and Commission, the core countries, and other African countries that are making efforts to support Mali's Government and its Defence and Security Forces, as well as to deploy troops within the framework of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA).

Our gratitude also goes to our international partners that have stood with Mali in these trying times. France merits thanks in this regard, for its timely and swift response to the Malian Government request to assist in halting the advance of the terrorist and criminal groups towards Bamako. I also wish to thank the United Nations and the European Union for their efforts. The same appreciation goes to all our other bilateral and multilateral partners.

Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,



You may recall that in resolution 2085, the UN Security Council authorised the deployment of AFISMA and requested the Secretary-General to establish a Trust Fund through which Member States can provide financial support to the Mission, and/or to the training and equipping of the Malian Defence and Security Forces. The UN Security Council also requested the Secretary-General to support, in coordination with the AU and ECOWAS, the holding of a donors' conference to solicit contributions to this Trust Fund, and called upon Member States to contribute generously and promptly to the Trust Fund.

The present Conference is being held following consultations with ECOWAS and as a follow up to relevant AU Peace and Security Council decisions and Security Council resolution 2085. The objective is to mobilize the necessary financial, logistical and capacity building support for both the Malian Defence and Security Forces and AFISMA. Together with ECOWAS, we have prepared budgetary and logistical requirements for both AFISMA and the Malian Defence and Security Forces.

It is AU's hope that this conference will live up to our expectations and that it will mark an important step in our collective endeavour to assist Mali in overcoming the challenges facing it. I therefore, appeal to all of you, in a spirit of shared responsibility, to generously respond to Mali's call for assistance.

Yesterday, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted a solemn declaration in which it decided to allocate 50 million dollars to AFISMA and the Malian Defence and Security Forces. In so doing, the Assembly acted in the spirit of the forthcoming Golden Jubilee of the OAU/AU, driven as it is by its commitment to Pan Africanism and conviction on Africa's Renaissance.

I thank you.