

## FINAL COMMUNIQUE

001/2016

### **29<sup>th</sup> High-level Meeting of Heads of UN Missions in West Africa** Dakar, 20 May 2016

1. At the invitation of Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the Heads of the United Nations Missions in West Africa and their representatives held their Twenty-ninth High-level Meeting on 20 May 2016 in Dakar.
2. In attendance were the Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General and Heads of UN Missions in Guinea Bissau (UNIOGBIS), Mr. Modibo Touré; in Liberia (UNMIL), Mr. Farid Zarif; and in West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, as well as the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General of UN Missions in Mali (MINUSMA), Mr. Koen Davidse; and the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie.
3. The objective of this bi-annual meeting is to provide insights and exchange views on peace and security dynamics in the areas of operation of the respective missions and in the West African region as a whole, and to strengthen coordination in order to address common challenges in such areas as elections, cross-border security, transnational trafficking, violent extremism, security sector and constitutional reform processes, and democratic transitions in the West Africa region.
4. The meeting welcomed the peaceful and credible electoral processes in Benin, Cabo Verde and Niger. Participants noted that the region was making progress in terms of democratic transition. In this regards, the Heads of missions expressed the hope that the upcoming elections in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali will achieve similar successes and consolidate democratic processes in countries emerging from crisis situations. In addition, participants noted the need to further promote the increased representation of women in the political sphere.
5. The meeting welcomed the ongoing constitutional reforms in a number of countries, which all preserve limitations of presidential mandates, and strengthen institutions, thus consolidating democracy. The meeting called for enhanced national and regional programs of collection and management of small arms and light weapons.
6. The Heads of missions strongly condemned the recent terrorist attacks in the region and highlighted the importance of support to countries in the region and regional organizations in countering this threat. Participants emphasized the need for a

comprehensive approach, which combines security-based counter-terrorism measures and intelligence-sharing, with preventive measures to address root causes of violent extremism, in accordance with the Secretary-General Plan of Action to prevent violent extremism.

7. The Heads of missions strongly condemned the killing of five peacekeepers of the Chadian contingent of MINUSMA in Northern Mali on 18 May 2016.

8. Participants noted the impact of climate change affecting countries in West Africa and the Sahel. Regarding migration movements in the region, the Heads of missions called for a regional approach taking into account root causes of migration as well as developmental issues, with a particular focus on providing opportunities for youth.

9. Participants welcomed the progress made in the fight against the Ebola Virus Disease and called on governments and international partners to remain engaged throughout the Ebola-recovery process.

10. The Heads of missions called for the comprehensive implementation of the Malian peace agreement. The meeting welcomed the engagement of various actors and initiatives in the Sahel, highlighting the importance of coordination in order to create synergies and to increase benefits for the populations of the region.

11. The Heads of missions discussed the situation in Guinea Bissau following the dismissal of the Government of Prime Minister Carlos Correia. They took note of ongoing consultations among all parties. They urged all national stakeholders to promote dialogue, inclusiveness and the rule of law, and to protect and defend the interest of the population as they continue to search for a sustainable solution to the political crisis.

12. Regarding the situation in Liberia, participants welcomed national efforts towards assuming security responsibilities from UNMIL and efforts in preparing the 2017 presidential and legislative elections. The Heads of missions expressed hope for greater progress in constitutional reform to strengthen national unity, and the fight against armed robbery, and sexual and gender-based violence and called for sufficient funding for the ongoing security transition to the Government of Liberia from UNMIL.

13. Participants agreed to continue to cooperate closely and to share information and experiences on key issues affecting the region.

14. The Heads of missions thanked SRSG Chambas of UNOWAS for the organization of the meeting.

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