



Bureau des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest et le Sahel

# UNOWAS

United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel

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*Ensemble pour la paix*

*Together for peace*

## **MESSAGE BY MOHAMED IBN CHAMBAS**

### **SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL**

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#### **TOGETHER, WE WILL DEFEAT COVID-19**

Since the outbreak and the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, our way of life and operating system have suddenly changed.

The whole world is trying to adapt to face the spread of this virus that threatens the entire humanity.

In a reaction that is now globalized, unprecedented and often drastic measures are being taken by all countries to protect the populations and eradicate this pandemic that knows no borders.

We are going through a difficult and complex ordeal that requires from all of us an unprecedented mobilization of our resources and efforts, but also - and above all - of our solidarity.

More than ever, the interest and the protection of the human being must be at the center of our primary concerns.

More than ever, our relations at the local, national, regional and international levels must be cemented by the strength of our solidarity and the ardor of our optimism.

Because our region, West Africa and the Sahel, is not spared.

Populations are also affected by the spread of the virus, which adds to the list of challenges already facing our region.

The authorities and governments in place have taken the necessary steps to protect populations and to develop an effective response to the crisis.

I commend the courage and dedication of all medical staff and the various services and institutions that work tirelessly in the countries of the region to protect the populations and

provide the necessary assistance, while ensuring compliance with the measures and recommendations dictated by the national authorities and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The discipline and the respect of the measures by the populations in the countries of the region, demonstrate the civic-mindedness and sense of solidarity that must be safeguarded.

It also underlines the determination of everyone to act in the interest of all.

I call on all citizens in West Africa and the Sahel to maintain this determination and continue to respect all the measures imposed by the national authorities to fight the spread of COVID-19.

I encourage authorities and governments in the region to redouble their efforts to ensure inclusive protection and assistance.

But it is crucial that the mobilization and efforts of the countries of the region be supported in a rapid and coordinated manner by the international community, which, in these difficult times, must fully play its role as an active promoter of a universal solidarity.

The United Nations has taken strong actions.

A call for the cancellation or postponement of the debt of African countries, has been launched by the United Nations to support developing countries.

On 25 March, the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, launched a \$2 billion global humanitarian response to support the world's poorest countries fight against COVID-19.

He also called for an immediate ceasefire in all corners of the globe to reinforce diplomatic action, help create conditions for the delivery of lifesaving aid, and bring hope to places that are among the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These are, among other daily actions, concrete responses to accompany the efforts of the countries affected by the pandemic - and an essential initiative to rebuild universal solidarity, which is now urgent.

United Nations personnel is mobilized on all fronts.

Resident Coordinators and the agencies and programmes of the United Nations, including WHO, based in the sub-region, are already working in coordination with national authorities and regional partners to support their responses against COVID-19.

The United Nations system and all its staff working in West Africa and the Sahel are part of the diverse communities and populations that make up this region.

Today, they are even more so. They are alongside the authorities and the populations in their fight against the spread of COVID-19, with dedication and solidarity.

Together - we will defeat COVID-19.

Mohamed Ibn Chambas

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