1ST SUMMIT OF THE COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE
NOUAKCHOTT PROCESS ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF
SECURITY COOPERATION AND THE OPERATIONALIZATION
OF THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE
IN THE SAHELO-SAHARAN REGION

NOUAKCHOTT, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA
18 DECEMBER 2014

NOUAKCHOTT DECLARATION
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2. Our Summit was held in the presence of the President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa, as well as his Special Envoy for the Sahel, the Special Envoy of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for the Sahel and the Special Representative of the European Union (EU) for the Sahel.

3. Our Summit was convened in pursuance of the recommendations of the third ministerial meeting of the countries in the region held in Niamey, Niger, on 19 February 2014, and the conclusions of the different meetings organized since the launching of the Nouakchott Process, in March 2013. It reflects our collective will to address the challenges to peace and security in the Sahel-Saharan region.

4. Our deliberations took place on the basis of the report submitted by the AU Commission on the implementation of the Nouakchott Process and the modalities for its enhancement, as well as the recommendations of the preparatory ministerial meeting held in Nouakchott on 17 December 2014. We seized this opportunity to consider the political and security situation in the Sahel-Saharan region, as well as the efforts aimed at overcoming the challenges at hand and promoting lasting peace, security and stability. We also seized the opportunity of this first meeting to take stock of the efforts deployed to enhance security cooperation and operationalise APSA in the Sahel-Saharan region and agree on the future steps to strengthen the Nouakchott Process.

**On the overall situation in the Sahel region**

5. We welcome the results registered so far in the Inclusive inter-Malian Peace Talks initiated in Algiers since July 2014, with the support of the Mediation led by Algeria and comprising the countries of the region (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria), as well as the AU, ECOWAS, the UN, the EU and the OIC. We urge the Malian parties to conclude a peace agreement when the Talks resume in Algiers, in January 2015, on the basis of the principles already agreed upon in the Roadmap signed on 24 July 2014. We request all the signatory armed groups to the Ouagadougou Agreement to dissociate themselves from the terrorist groups. We reiterate our commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Mali, as well as to the unitary nature and the republican and secular form of the State. We are convinced that a speedy conclusion of these Talks, with the signing of a comprehensive and final peace agreement, will greatly facilitate the efforts to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime in our region.
6. We welcome the significant progress made in Burkina Faso, following the events that took place at the end of October 2014, with the establishment of a Transition leading to the organization of free, fair and credible elections, in November 2015, and encourage the Burkinabé stakeholders to persevere in their efforts, in a spirit of consensus and inclusiveness. We call upon the international community to provide all the necessary support. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of an International Support Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso (GISAT-BF), under the joint auspices of the AU, ECOWAS and the UN, and look forward to the convening of the inaugural meeting of GISAT-BF, during the month of January 2015.

7. We are deeply concerned about the serious crisis affecting Libya, marked by the escalation of violence and the collapse of state authority, thus posing a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the entire Sahel-Saharan region. We reaffirm our full solidarity with the people of Libya in these trying moments of their history. We fully support the efforts undertaken by the AU and Libya’s neighbors. In this regard, we support the efforts being made by Algeria and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to create conditions conducive to a dialogue between all the Libyan parties, with the exception of the terrorist groups recognized as such, with a view to promoting a political solution that preserves the unity, territorial integrity and stability of Libya. We note with satisfaction the convening of the inaugural meeting of the International Contact Group for Libya (ICG-L), in Addis Ababa, on 3 December 2014, and stress the central role of the ICG-L in the coordination of international action for Libya.

8. We are also deeply concerned about the worsening of the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel-Saharan region, as well as the close links that terrorist armed groups maintain with transnational organized crime, particularly drug and human trafficking, money laundering and illicit arms trafficking. We strongly condemn the criminal attacks that the Boko Haram terrorist group continues to perpetrate in northern Nigeria and in neighboring countries. We also note with concern that the situation obtaining in Libya has enabled terrorist groups to find sanctuaries in some parts of that country.

**On the implementation status of the Nouakchott Process and the modalities of its enhancement**

9. In the light of the foregoing, we stress that the regular meetings of the heads of the intelligence and security services of the countries of the region constitute an indispensable tool for the exchange of information and intelligence in the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime, as well as the promotion of confidence and good neighborliness.

10. We welcome the results recorded in the implementation of the agreed actions and urge for the intensification of the efforts made. In this regard, we request that everything be done to ensure that these meetings are held every two months, as agreed, and that, as much as possible, the heads of the intelligence and security services participate in person in these meetings. We urge all the stakeholders concerned, including the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL), the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services geared towards intelligence and information of Africa (CISSA), in close cooperation with the AU Commission, to pursue and intensify their efforts to exchange views and mutual assistance, as well as the implementation of the outstanding aspects of the operational conclusions of the meeting of the heads of Intelligence and security Services.

11. We reiterate the imperative need for the continuation of the capacity building programmes for the countries of the region initiated by the AU Commission within the framework of the Nouakchott Process, including training for the intelligence and security
services. We encourage the Commission to intensify its efforts to mobilize the necessary resources for this purpose. At the same time, we pledge to leave no stone unturned to build our respective national capacities to be able to fully assume our responsibilities within the framework of the collective efforts of the Region.

12. We stress the need to speed up and finalize the reflection on the operationalization of APSA in the Sahelo-Saharan region, given that the constraints of history and geography in the Sahelo-Saharan region, as well as the contemporary political realities, compel us to adopt a collective, coordinated and concerted approach to the multiple challenges at hand.

13. Reiterating our commitment to the relevant AU instruments, particularly the Constitutive Act, the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP), and the African Non-Aggression and Common Defense Pact, as well as the AU Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention), we fully support the efforts to enhance security at the borders, through strengthened operational cooperation modalities, such as the joint patrols and mixed units involving the defense and security forces of the countries of the region, as well as other security arrangements (customs and police cooperation centres, mutual deployment of liaison officers, bi- and multi-lateral radio frequencies, etc.), on the basis of existing experiences. These enhanced operational cooperation modalities will constitute the components of the Capacity for an Immediate Response to Crises in the Sahel (CIRCS). In this regard, we request the Commission, in close cooperation with ECOWAS and with the support of international partners, including the United nations, the EU and other international stakeholders concerned, to take all the necessary measures, including the convening, in Mali, at the latest in February 2015, of a meeting of Ministers of Defence and Security and the Chiefs of Staff and heads of intelligence and security services of the countries of the region, for the conduct of the necessary studies for the establishment of these mechanisms.

14. We commit ourselves to speed up the signing and ratification of the relevant AU instruments to facilitate the implementation of the actions agreed upon within the framework of the Nouakchott process.

15. We welcome the conclusions of the ministerial meeting of the troop contributing countries to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), held in Niamey, Niger, on 5 November 2014, and call upon the UN Security Council to urgently take the necessary measures to enhance the capacity of the Mission so as to enable it fulfill effectively its mandate. In this respect, we express our full readiness, in consultation with the United Nations, to contribute to the strengthening of MINUSMA, in particular through the establishment, within MINUSMA and with robust rules of engagement and means, along the model of the Intervention Brigade of the UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), of a rapid intervention force to be deployed from within the contributing countries in northern Mali, to contribute to the fight against the armed terrorist and criminal groups and to facilitate the successful completion of the stabilization efforts in that part of the country. To this end, we request the Chairperson of the Commission to urgently undertake consultations with the countries in the region, as well as with the UN and other stakeholders concerned, including the convening of a meeting of experts, with a view to submitting to the PSC, in February 2015 at the latest, concrete recommendations on the envisaged force for adoption and transmission to the UN Security Council.

16. We welcome the efforts made by the member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin to neutralize the Boko Haram terrorist group and express our full support for the establishment of a Joint Multinational Task Force. In this regard, and pursuant to
the PSC communiqué of 25 November 2014, we request the Commission and the countries of
the region to redouble their joint efforts to mobilize the necessary international support,
including the adoption by the UN Security Council of a resolution supporting the establishment
and deployment of the Joint Multinational Task Force, as well as the establishment of a Trust
Fund.

17. We request the Commission to take the necessary measures for the operationalization,
in the course of the 1st quarter 2015, of the Secretariat of the Nouakchott Process in Niamey,
under MISAHEL leadership. At the same time, steps will be taken to enhance the AU’s presence
in the region, including the Liaison Office in Ndjamena and the ACSRT.

18. We welcome the preparation by the AU of a Strategy for the Sahel region, which should
foster the implementation, in the Sahelo-Saharan region, of major continental initiatives,
particularly those taken within the framework of NEPAD, and the mobilization of increased
support for the efforts to promote lasting peace, security and stability through good
governance. We urge the Commission, in consultation with ECOWAS, the UN, the EU and other
international partners to accelerate the implementation of this Strategy.

19. We express our deep gratitude to our partners for their invaluable assistance to our
efforts to address the challenges to peace and security in the Sahelo-Saharan region. We
urgently appeal to them to increase their support to the collective initiatives that our States will
take, within the framework of the Nouakchott Process, to address the threat that terrorism,
violent extremism and transnational organized crime pose to international peace and security.

20. We agree to organize an annual summit of the countries participating in the Nouakchott
Process, in order to review regularly the collective challenges to be addressed in pursuit of our
common objectives. At the invitation of President Idriss Deby Itno of Chad, our next Summit will
take place in Ndjamena at a date to be agreed upon through diplomatic channels through
appropriate consultations.

On the challenges posed by the Ebola Epidemic

21. We note that our Summit is being held at a time when brotherly countries in West Africa
are facing the Ebola virus epidemic with devastating consequences that have the potential to
reverse the important gains recorded in the area of peace-building and reconstruction in those
countries. We express our solidarity with the countries and people affected and appeal for the
continuation and intensification of African and international mobilization to address this
disaster. In this regard, we congratulate the Chairperson of the Commission on her personal
commitment and we welcome the establishment of the AU-Counter Ebola Support Mission in
West Africa (ASEOWA) and express the commitment of our respective countries to contribute to
this important initiative.

Vote of thanks

22. We express our deep gratitude to our brother President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz of
Mauritania, AU current Chairman, as well as the Government and people of Mauritania, for the
generous hospitality and warm African welcome and care accorded to us throughout our stay in
Nouakchott. We are also grateful to the Mauritanian authorities for all the facilities made
available for the smooth running of our Summit.

Nouakchott, 18 December 2014