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**SECOND MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE ENHANCEMENT  
OF SECURITY COOPERATION AND THE OPERATIONALIZATION  
OF THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN THE  
SAHELO-SAHARAN REGION**

**NDJAMENA, CHAD, 11 SEPTEMBER 2013**

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE NOUAKCHOTT  
MINISTERIAL MEETING OF 17 MARCH 2013**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The first ministerial meeting on the enhancement of security cooperation and the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the Sahelo-Saharan region, held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, on 17 March 2013, agreed on a set of measures to address the security challenges facing the region. It was agreed that the relevant Ministers will meet at least once every six months. The conclusions of the Nouakchott ministerial meeting are annexed to this report.

2. The present report provides an overview of the implementation of these measures, progress achieved and challenges encountered. It concludes with observations on the way forward.

**II. MEETINGS OF THE HEADS OF INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY SERVICES OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE SAHELO-SAHARAN REGION AND FOLLOW-UP STEPS**

3. The Nouakchott conclusions provide for the holding of regular meetings of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of the countries of the region. It was decided that the first of such meetings would be held in Bamako within one month of the date of the Nouakchott ministerial meeting, and that, thereafter, these meetings will take place every two months. To date, the Commission has organized three meetings of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region. The first meeting took place in Bamako, on 18 April 2013; the second in Abidjan, from 20 to 21 June 2013; and the third, in Ndjamen on 10 September 2013.

4. These meetings reviewed the security situation in the region; assessed the capacity building needs of existing national and regional structures; and identified modalities for enhanced cooperation and sharing of intelligence. They further proved to be a valuable confidence building tool, as the guiding principle for facilitating the enhancement of regional security cooperation. They have also contributed to the fostering of the spirit of shared responsibility, collaboration and transparency.

5. The following are some of the measures agreed to at these meetings, namely, the:

- (i) establishment, by the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), of a secure communication system among the Intelligence and Security Services of the countries of the region within the framework of the enlarged system programmed for all the CISSA member services. This process is underway, and is expected to be finalized soon;
- (ii) production and dissemination of a special edition of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT)'s *Daily News Highlights* devoted to the Sahel region. The ACSRT has already launched this *News Highlights* since the end of June 2013;

- (iii) development, by the ACSRT, of a capacity building matrix to address the gaps in skills and expertise, as well as the organization of capacity building activities and training workshops. An initial draft has been elaborated and is currently being finalized;
- (iv) organization of a workshop, in cooperation with the Libyan authorities, on border security. The workshop has taken place, and its outcome is covered in the paragraphs below; and
- (v) dispatch of a joint CISSA, ACSRT and Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL) mission to Libya, to exchange views on existing security challenges and possible responses. This mission has taken place, and its outcome is also covered in the paragraphs below.

6. The operational conclusions adopted by the Abidjan meeting are annexed to this report. Steps have been taken to follow-up on the Abidjan meeting conclusions, as outlined below.

### **III. WORKSHOP ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF OPERATIONAL LAND BORDER SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE SAHELO-SAHARAN REGION**

7. Pursuant to the conclusions of the Abidjan meeting of Heads of Intelligence and Security Services, a workshop on enhancing operational land border security cooperation in the Sahelo-Saharan region was organized, in collaboration with the Libyan Government, in Tripoli, on 4 and 5 September 2013, with the participation of the countries of the region and the relevant regional and international actors. The workshop aimed at building on the areas identified in the Tripoli Action Plan for enhancing operational cooperation, adopted by the regional ministerial meeting on border security, convened by the Libyan Government, from 11 to 12 March 2012. The conclusions of the workshop are, herewith, attached. The following recommendations are worth highlighting:

- (i) speedy operationalization of the mechanisms provided for in the Tripoli Action Plan, particularly with respect to coordination, exchange of information, confidence-building measures, as well as other operational measures to address the threats and risks to border security;
- (ii) expansion, replication and the speedy and effective operationalization of bilateral and multilateral arrangements concluded by some countries of the region on border security cooperation;
- (iii) organization of follow-up meetings and workshops at the regional and sub-regional levels, under the auspices of the AU;
- (iv) timely exchange of information between and among the various security agencies at the national and regional levels;
- (v) exchange of experiences and best practices in the field of border security; and
- (vi) development of necessary expertise and skills.

#### IV. ASSESSMENT MISSIONS

##### (a) Niger

8. At its 21<sup>st</sup> ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa, from 26 to 27 May 2013, the Assembly of the Union adopted a *Declaration on the terrorist attacks in Niger and on the solidarity of Africa with the Republic of Niger [Assembly/AU/Decl.2(XXI)]*. In this Declaration, the Assembly strongly condemned the attacks in Agadez and Arlit, on 23 May 2013; expressed the solidarity of Africa with the people and Government of Niger and assured them of its full support in their efforts to combat terrorism and organized transnational crime; and requested the Commission to urgently send an assessment mission to Niger to determine the modalities for assistance to that country.

9. Consequently, the Commission dispatched a mission comprising the ACSRT, CISSA and UFL to Niger, from 10 to 15 June 2013. The mission visited Niamey, Agadez and Arlit, to conduct consultations with the relevant Nigerien authorities, assess the security threats, and the measures taken by the authorities, and made recommendations on the assistance that Niger may require. The Commission is working on the follow-up steps to be taken to implement the recommendations of the mission. The Abidjan meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services was briefed on the outcome of this assessment mission to Niger.

##### (b) Libya

10. Within the context of the operational conclusions of the Abidjan meeting, and at the invitation of the Libyan Government, a joint ACSRT, CISSA and UFL mission was undertaken to Libya, from 3 to 5 September 2013. The objective of the mission was to (i) obtain firsthand information about the measures taken by the Libyan Government to address challenges relating to border security; (ii) discuss modalities for cooperation between Libya and the countries of the region; and (iii) agree on effective communication modalities between Libya and ACSRT, CISSA and UFL and modalities of support to Libya. The report of the mission is still being finalized.

#### V. OPERATIONALIZATION OF APSA

11. The Nouakchott ministerial meeting discussed the operationalization of the APSA in the Sahelo-Saharan region, bearing in mind the inappropriateness of the geographical coverage of the different existing structures. The participants stressed the need for greater synergy among the different components of the African Standby Force (ASF) covering the region (North, West and Central), to address the security challenges faced by the Sahelo-Saharan region, notably through closer cooperation in the field of intelligence sharing, training and equipment, as well as the building of the necessary operational capability. A number of steps were to be taken by the Commission in this respect, including the elaboration of a questionnaire on the basis of which the countries and organizations concerned would convey their views and proposals on the modalities for operationalizing and strengthening the APSA in the Sahelo-Saharan region; the subsequent preparation, by the Commission, of a report on the matter; and the convening of a meeting of the countries concerned to consider the report and agree on the best way forward.

12. However, while the Commission was working on the follow-up to the steps agreed upon in Nouakchott, new developments occurred. These relate to: (i) the ongoing assessment of the ASF, as directed by the 6<sup>th</sup> ordinary meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Security and Safety (STCDSS), held in Addis Ababa, on 30 April 2013, and endorsed by the 21<sup>st</sup> ordinary session of the Assembly of the Union, held from 26 to 27 May 2013; and (ii) the decision, in principle, to immediately establish, as a transitional arrangement, pending the full operationalization of the ASF and its Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC), an African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), to provide the AU with a flexible and robust force made up of military/police capabilities, force enablers and multipliers, equipment and resources to be voluntarily provided by Member States, for deployment in response to emergency situations. Both the outcome of the assessment of the ASF and the modalities for the operationalization of the ACIRC will be submitted to a meeting of the STCDSS, later this year. The Commission will await the outcome of this meeting and further guidance from the Assembly of the Union, at its January 2014 ordinary session, to determine how best to follow-up on the Nouakchott conclusions on the operationalization of APSA in the Sahelo-Saharan region.

## **VI. OBSERVATIONS**

13. Several initiatives have been taken to follow up on the conclusions of the first ministerial meeting of the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region. These have made it possible to sustain the Nouakchott Process, notably by fostering confidence building among the intelligence and security agencies, providing a forum for the exchange of information, creating avenues for operational coordination in dealing with the challenges at hand, and mobilizing capacity-building support.

14. While these initiatives are commendable, much more still needs to be done to more effectively address the serious security challenges facing the region. These range from terrorism to transnational organized crime, including human and drug trafficking, to the proliferation of weapons and the existence of armed groups bent on destabilizing the region. This situation calls for sustained and collective action, within the framework of the Nouakchott Process, as well as the relevant regional organizations and bodies.

15. The period under review has also been marked by the transition from the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Mission for Stabilization in Mali (MINUSMA), which took place on 1 July 2013. There has also been tremendous progress in the process aimed at ending the crisis in Mali, as demonstrated by the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement, of 18 June 2013, between the transitional authorities and the armed movements in the North, the completion of the presidential election, on 2 August 2013, and the swearing in of the new President, on 4 September 2013.

16. In launching the Nouakchott Process, the AU and the countries of the region also aimed at supporting the implementation of AFISMA's mandate. It is critical that such support continues to be availed to MINUSMA, and that appropriate consultation mechanisms are established with this Mission. It is equally important, as requested by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), that the UN, notably through MINUSMA, extends support to the ongoing regional security cooperation initiatives within the framework of the Nouakchott Process, considering the transnational nature of the threats faced. On its part, the AU is

working on a Sahel-wide strategy encompassing political, diplomatic, security and socio-economic dimensions. The development and implementation of the strategy are coordinated by the AU High Representative for Mali and Sahel, who is based in Bamako and will be supported by appropriate staff both in Mali and the wider region.