SPEECH
of H.E. Mr. Pierre Buyoya
Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission
of the African Union and Head of the African-led International
Support Mission in Mali

2ND MEETING OF HEADS OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICES
OF THE SAHELO-SAHARAN REGION
Abidjan, 20 June 2013

- Honourable Minister in the Office of the President of the Republic, Minister of Defence,
- Distinguished Representative of ECOWAS,
- Mr. Director of Peace and Security of the African Union,
- Distinguished Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union in Côte d'Ivoire,
- Heads of Intelligence Services of the Sahelo-Saharan States,
- Director of ACSRT,
- Head of the UFL,
- Distinguished Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am particularly pleased to warmly welcome you to Abidjan on the occasion of the Second meeting of Heads of Intelligence Services of the Sahelo-Saharan region.

Your presence here, today, reflects the interest you all have in the issues of peace and security in West Africa and the Sahelo-Saharan region and your determination to find solutions that will contribute to the development of our respective countries.

I would like, on your behalf and on my own behalf, thank the Ivorian Government for having accepted to host the Second meeting of the Heads of Intelligence Services of the Sahelo-Saharan region and to express our gratitude for the warm welcome accorded to us and the excellent facilities placed at our disposal for the smooth conduct of the meeting.

Honourable Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You will recall that within the framework of the search of lasting solutions to the crisis in Mali, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, at its 353rd meeting, held on 25 January 2013, in Addis Ababa, requested the Commission of the African Union to take all the necessary measures to enhance cooperation and exchange of intelligence information between the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region and Mali.
Pursuant to that decision, the Commission of the African Union brought together, on 17 March 2013, in Nouakchott, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Foreign Ministers of the States of the Sahel-Saharan region to consider together the best way to implement that decision and that meeting came up with a political statement that expressed the political will to work together in the area of intelligence information according to the relevant recommendations of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After the meeting in Nouakchott, the First meeting of the Heads of Intelligence Services of the Sahel-Saharan region was held on 18 April 2013 in Bamako and had stressed the need to enhance security cooperation and the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahel-Saharan region between the Intelligence Services, the exchange of information for the eradication of terrorism and transnational crime.

Today’s meeting is the follow up of these two meetings and aims, inter alia, to take stock of the security situation in Mali and the region, consider the related threats, determine the modalities for enhancing cooperation between the different Intelligence services in the region and see the extent to which the States of the region can pool their resources to face the situation.

Honourable Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The regional dimension of the crisis in Mali is not to be overemphasized as evidenced by the terrorist attacks in Agadez and Arlit on 23 May 2013. In response to these ignoble events, the Assembly of the African Union, meeting in its 21st Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa, had in its Declaration, instructed the Chairperson of the Commission to send an Assessment Mission and Solidarity of Africa with Niger. During this meeting, you will have the opportunity to consider the Report and draw the conclusions from the mission which visited Niger, from 10 to 15 June 2013.

Regarding the situation in Mali, I have the pleasure to inform you that since our last meeting, we recorded significant progress that translated into the Brussels Conference on the Reconstruction in Mali, held on 15 May 2013, the acceleration of the preparations for the organisation of the Presidential election on 28 July 2013, but also the affirmed political will of the Malian stakeholders to hold dialogue and find a positive way out of the crisis. To this end, the AFISMA has spared no effort, in consultation with the African Union, ECOWAS, the United Nations, European Union, France and the United States of America to bring Malian parties back to the negotiating table, especially after the convening of the Fourth meeting of the Support and Follow up Group on the situation in Mali.

The outcome of these efforts reflected on the Malian political scene with the trust that begins to pervade each other and today I am very pleased to announce the signing on 18 June 2013, between the Government Mali and the armed groups, of the Preliminary Agreement on Presidential Elections and inclusive Peace Talks in Mali. This Agreement, which finally opens the way for the organisation of the Presidential election, scheduled for 28 July 2013, throughout the national territory, makes it possible to consider better prospects for the peaceful resolution of the crisis in this country.
Consequently, I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the Malian parties on the one hand, especially President Dioncounda Traore and on the other, all those who, directly or indirectly, contributed to this happy outcome. In particular, I would like to express our deep appreciation to President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso, ECOWAS Mediator for the Malian crisis and President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Associate Mediator and President Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and Chairman of ECOWAS, for their tireless efforts and personal commitment that enabled this significant progress in the peace process in Mali.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It pleases me to inform you that since the unanimous adoption on 25 April 2013, of Resolution 2100 (2100) by the UN Security Council, AFISMA is working in close cooperation with MINUSMA and the transformation process of the Africa-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) into a UN Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is continuing normally. In this regard, we will, on 1 July 2013, proceed with the transfer of the powers of AFISMA to MINUSMA.

Honourable Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cannot conclude my remarks without reaffirming that the terrorist threat and the cross-border crime represents not only a regional challenge but also a Continental and global challenge that cannot be taken up unilaterally by one country alone. Therefore, it is important to stress that the enhancement of our cooperation, information sharing, the synergy of our collective and concerted actions and the pooling of our resources are the only guarantees for the success of our initiative in this matter.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and thank you for your attention.