REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR ANTONIO TETE,
AU PERMANENT OBSERVER TO THE UNITED NATIONS, TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON
THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN MALI

NEW YORK, 6 DECEMBER 2012
REMUNRS BY AMBASSADOR ANTONIO TETE,
AU PERMANENT OBSERVER TO THE UNITED NATIONS, TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON
THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN MALI

NEW YORK, 6 DECEMBER 2012

Mr. President,
Members of the Security Council,
Members of the ECOWAS delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to thank the President of the Security Council for inviting the African Union (AU) to this important meeting. We are highly appreciative of the efforts of the Security Council regarding the situation in Mali and the support extended so far to the AU and ECOWAS. I would like, in particular, to highlight the adoption of resolutions 2056 (2012) and 2071 (2012), as a demonstration of the commitment of the Security Council and its members fully to shoulder their responsibilities on an issue that clearly and so obviously threatens international peace and security.

I also would like to reiterate the AU’s appreciation to the Secretary-General for the UN’s invaluable contribution towards the elaboration of the Strategic Concept for the Resolution of the Crises in Mali, as well as for its active involvement, including through experts dispatched to Bamako, in the process of developing the Concept of Operations for the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA).

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are all aware, the situation in Mali is of utmost concern to ECOWAS, the countries of the region and the AU. It poses a serious threat to Mali, the region and far beyond, particularly in view of the entrenchment of terrorist and other criminal groups in the northern part of the country.

The situation also calls into question basic principles of the AU and the larger international community. Let me highlight here the respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Mali, the repudiation of the recourse to armed rebellion to further political claims, as well as the rejection of terrorism and criminal activities. Because these are principles that are so fundamental to the maintenance of peace, security and stability on the continent, we need to react swiftly and strongly to any attempt to undermine them.

Since the outbreak of the crisis in Mali, ECOWAS and the AU have exerted sustained efforts to address the situation, as demonstrated by the initiatives taken by the ECOWAS Chairman, President Alassane Ouattara, and Mediator, President Blaise Compaore; the encouragement to the Malian stakeholders to adopt an inclusive Roadmap on the conduct of the Transition; and the planning for the deployment of an operation. The Chairperson of the AU
Commission, Dr. Dlamini-Zuma, has appointed former President Pierre Buyoya, as the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel. He has since travelled to Mali and elsewhere in the region, in pursuance of the Strategic Concept and related Peace and Security Council decisions. He is working in close coordination with the region and the international partners, in particular the UN Special Envoy, Romano Prodi.

Both ECOWAS and the AU are of course mindful of the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the crisis facing Mali. They are equally mindful of the need to take into account their regional dimension, in the broader context of the challenges facing the Sahelo-Saharan region. The Strategic Concept, I alluded to earlier, aims precisely to provide an overall framework that can guide the efforts of the international community.

The efforts we are making revolve around three key components: (i) dialogue with the Malian armed groups willing to seek a peaceful response to any legitimate grievance they may have, within the strict framework of the principles articulated by ECOWAS, the AU and the UN, namely respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Mali, which are not debatable, as well as the rejection of armed rebellion to further political claims and the repudiation of terrorism and criminal activities; (ii) development by the Malian stakeholders of an inclusive Roadmap for the achievement of the objectives of the Transition; and (iii) deployment of AFISMA to help the Malian authorities restore the unity and territorial integrity of their country and dismantle the terrorist and other criminal networks active in the northern part of the country, including by strengthening the capacity of the Malian defense and security forces.

Clearly, the deployment of AFISMA is a key component of the Strategic Concept. We strongly believe that the urgent establishment of the Mission will go a long way in contributing towards the overall objective we are pursuing, namely facilitating the creation of the necessary conditions for a stable and democratic Malian State responsive to the needs of all its citizens, fully exercising its authority over its national territory and effectively assuming its responsibilities in addressing regional security and other challenges.

In this respect, the AU notes that the report submitted by the Secretary-General, while stressing the need for further planning and preparations, recognizes nonetheless that the CONOPS developed with the support of the United Nations provides a useful basis for the consideration of the AU’s request to the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, to authorize AU Member States to establish AFISMA for an initial period of one year, to take all necessary measures to assist the Malian authorities to recover the occupied regions in the north, in order to restore the unity and territorial integrity of Mali and reduce the threats posed by terrorists and affiliated groups, including transnational organized criminal networks. It is, therefore, our hope that the Security Council will authorize the deployment of AFISMA without delay.

We view the political track regarding the transition in Mali, the negotiations with the Malian armed groups, and the deployment of AFISMA as mutually reinforcing. Any perception of a lack of decisiveness on any of these tracks may send the wrong message to the terrorist and criminal networks, as well as to the armed groups that are not committed to a negotiated
solution, while prolonging the suffering of the civilian population and increasing the threat to regional and international peace and security.

The deployment and operations of AFISMA would require strong UN support. Experience in the Darfur region of Sudan, with AMIS, and, currently, in Somalia, with AMISOM, has clearly shown the limitations of, and constraints linked to, support provided on a voluntary basis. I would like therefore to echo the call made by the AU Peace and Security Council in its communiqué of 13 November 2012 for the establishment of a UN support package funded through assessed contributions to ensure sustained and predictable support to the Mission. Equally important is the need to extend the required support to the Malian defense and security forces, through the establishment of a dedicated Trust Fund.

Mali is at a crossroads. Time is of essence. We need to act fast and to send a clear and strong message on the resolve of the international community and its support to the African-led efforts. In particular, and in line with the Peace and Security Council communiqué of 13 November 2012, we call on this august organ to take the following steps:

(i) to extend full support to the Strategic Concept in all its components and to the efforts made to ensure their effective and speedy implementation;

(ii) to authorize the deployment of AFISMA as provided for in the harmonized Concept of Operations endorsed by the PSC it being understood that ECOWAS and AU will continue, with the support of the UN and in collaboration with all stakeholders, to work on outstanding planning and operational issues;

(iii) to put in place a UN support package for AFISMA funded through assessed contributions; and

(iv) to establish a Trust Fund to support the Malian defense and security forces, especially in view of the lead role expected of them in addressing the security challenges in their country.

The AU is committed to building a strong partnership with the UN and Mali. Indeed, it is only through joint efforts that we would be able effectively to support the Malian people and authorities as they strive to overcome the very difficult circumstances facing their country, and contribute to the promotion of lasting security, stability and development in the entire Sahel region.

At the AU, we have no doubt that, as in the past, we can count on the Security Council’s commitment and continued support to Africa’s efforts in Mali and elsewhere on the continent.