

Statement by the President of the Security Council

The Security Council reiterates its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations and recalls that cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations, consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations is an important pillar of collective security.

The Security Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of countries in the Sahel region.

The Security Council expresses its concern about the underlying problems in the Sahel region and remains engaged in addressing the complex security and political challenges in this region that are inter-related with humanitarian and developmental issues as well as adverse effects of climate and ecological changes.

The Security Council remains seriously concerned over the insecurity and the significant ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Sahel region, which is further complicated by the presence of armed groups, including separatist movements, terrorist and criminal networks, and their increased activities, as well as the continued proliferation of weapons from within and outside the region that threaten peace, security, and stability of States in this region and in this regard stresses the importance of the implementation of all relevant Security Council Resolutions including those with regards to arms embargoes.

The Security Council also reiterates its grave concern about the consequences of instability in the North of Mali on the Sahel region and beyond, and stresses the need to respond swiftly to this crisis through a comprehensive and strategic approach in order to ensure the territorial integrity of Mali and restore its stability and prevent further destabilization of States of the Sahel.

The Security Council expresses its grave concern about the increasing entrenchment in the Sahel of terrorist elements, including Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), affiliated groups and other extremist groups, and its consequences for the countries of the region and beyond.

The Security Council continues to be concerned about the serious threats posed by transnational organized crime in the Sahel region, and its increasing links, in some cases, with terrorism.

The Security Council strongly condemns the abuses of human rights committed in the region by terrorist and other extremist groups, including violence against civilians, notably women and children, extrajudicial and arbitrary executions, hostage-taking, trafficking in persons, and recruitment of child soldiers.

The Security Council reiterates its strongest condemnation of the desecration, damage and destruction of sites of holy, historic and cultural significance, especially but not exclusively those designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including in the city of Timbuktu.

The Security Council welcomes the initiatives and measures taken by the States of the Sahel, West Africa and the Maghreb, the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Community of Sahelo Saharan States (CENSAD), international partners such as the European Union (EU) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the United Nations to tackle the complex multidimensional

challenges facing the Sahel region but stresses the importance of strengthening trans-regional, interregional and international cooperation on the basis of a common and shared responsibility.

The Security Council reaffirms, in this regard, the urgent need for enhanced and inclusive cooperation and coordination between States of the Sahel and the Maghreb, and among each other, in collaboration with relevant United Nations entities, regional and international partners, in order to combat AQIM activities and to prevent further progress of AQIM elements and affiliated groups in the Sahel and Maghreb regions and beyond, as well as to tackle the proliferation of all arms and transnational organized crime, including illicit activities such as drug trafficking.

The Security Council recognizes the work done and efforts made by the relevant United Nations bodies, entities, relevant subsidiary bodies, and other international, regional, and sub-regional organizations aimed at enhancing capacity building of States of the Sahel and urges them to step up their efforts to provide, upon request, assistance for these countries in order to contribute to security and arms control and tackle transnational organized criminal activities and terrorism.

The Security Council reiterates the need for an enhanced, comprehensive, and more regional approach to the provision of humanitarian assistance to the food insecure, conflict-affected, and displaced populations in accordance with applicable international Law and the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, and emphasizes the necessity to turn attention to the chronic structural nature of food insecurity and nutrition crisis in the Sahel region, address the underlying causes of chronic repetitive humanitarian emergencies as well as strengthen regional mechanisms for early warning and disaster risk reduction .

The Security Council commends efforts made by the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other agencies to provide assistance and draw attention to the scale of the problems in the Sahel as well as the support provided by countries in the region and beyond.

The Security Council recognizes that the strengthening of State institutions, economic and social development, respect for human rights and the rule of law are necessary to ensure long-term security, development and stability in the Sahel region.

The Security Council also recognizes the importance of a comprehensive approach encompassing security, development and humanitarian issues to address the immediate and long term needs of the Sahel region.

The Security Council welcomes the initiative of the Secretary General to hold a High Level Meeting on the Sahel, on 26 September 2012, in the margin of the 67th General Assembly of the United Nations.

The Security Council also welcomes the holding of the Rome Meeting of December 7th 2012 by the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Sahel which identified concrete and coordinated actions to advance the resolution of the multiple crises in the Sahel region.

The Council encourages the Special Envoy to pursue his efforts in order to coordinate bilateral, inter-regional and international response and support for the Sahel region and to engage constructively with other representatives from regional, sub-regional organizations, bilateral partners and countries of the region and in this regard stresses the importance of a coherent, comprehensive

and coordinated approach by all United Nations entities involved in the Sahel region and their cooperation with one another with a view of maximizing synergies.

The Security Council reiterates, in this regard, its call to the Secretary General and his Special Envoy to finalize as soon as possible the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel region encompassing governance, security, humanitarian, human rights and developmental issues as requested by Security Council Resolution 2056 (2012).

