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Seventy-fourth year

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New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
France	Mr. Delattre
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Djani
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
United States of America	Mr. Hunter

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/1174)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/1174)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Her Excellency Ms. Kamissa Camara, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/1174, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.

I now give the floor to Ms. Keita.

Ms. Keita (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the members of the Security Council on the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/1174) on the situation in Mali.

Before doing so, allow me to share with the Council some brief observations following my visit to Mali one month ago, accompanied by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco. We were there to assess the progress made in the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. During our stay, we had the privilege of meeting President Keita, his Prime Minister, the members of the Government, the signatory movements to the agreement, the opposition, civil society, the diplomatic community and the United Nations country team, among others.

During our visit, we were particularly encouraged by the constructive momentum that seems to be present in relations among the parties. The general opinion is

that, since the holding of the presidential elections in July and August, more emphasis has been placed on the implementation of the agreement. The determination of the signatory parties has been illustrated, among other things, by the establishment in September of a ministry tasked with monitoring the implementation of the agreement and by the signing of the Pact for Peace in October. The more frequent meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee is another concrete example.

It is no doubt too early to fully evaluate the impact of the sanctions adopted by the Council in December against three people who have hindered the implementation of the peace agreement. However, it is fair to say that the parties are fully aware of the Council's frustration and its impatience with regard to the ongoing delays in the implementation of the agreement. That undoubtedly explains the efforts under way to accelerate the implementation of its key provisions.

Finally, we were pleased to note through our conversations with the parties that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) continues to be seen as playing an essential political role in working with all parties to accelerate the implementation of the agreement. The conclusions of our joint visit will be reflected in the Secretary-General's next report, to be submitted to members of the Security Council for their review in early March, six months after the swearing in of the President of the Republic.

The progress highlighted in the Secretary-General's report under consideration touches upon issues that are central to the peace process, including the institutional reforms envisaged in the agreement. The reconstitution and reform of the defence and security forces remains key to establishing lasting peace in Mali. The launching, in November, of an accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is a first concrete step to that end. The holding of a high-level workshop on security sector reform in December enabled progress on important issues.

With regard to institutional reforms to strengthen decentralization, we welcome the holding in November of consultations on administrative restructuring as a first step in carrying out territorial reform. Dialogue must continue in order to reach a consensus on these reforms. I therefore not only invite the Government but also members of the political class, whether they be the

opposition or the majority, to pursue their efforts in order to ensure greater inclusivity in these discussions.

With regard to national reconciliation, the National Assembly has postponed discussions on the national accord act in order to allow for more consultations. I urge the parties to continue their efforts to support the reconciliation process, which is indispensable to fulfilling the vision of a Mali that is united and fully anchored on the path of peace. In that context, the fight against impunity must remain a top priority. There can be no compromise that would jeopardize the progress that has been made towards reconciliation. It must be noted that the political landscape has remained polarized since the presidential election. A constructive and inclusive dialogue among political stakeholders, including civil society, women and young people, is essential in order to carry out the ambitious reform agenda set out in the 2015 agreement.

Recent signs of a more open dialogue — which made it possible, for example, to reach a consensus on postponing the elections — are encouraging. I strongly urge the political class to continue along that path, working together to build the foundations of a united and reconciled nation with an inclusive system of representation.

(spoke in English)

As I witnessed during my visit to Gao and Mopti, the security situation remains of grave concern and a major challenge to the implementation of the peace agreement. Asymmetrical attacks continue to target peacekeepers, national and international forces and, increasingly, civilians. In Ménaka, MINUSMA was targeted on 21 December by a complex attack on its camp, which once again indicated the determination of extremist groups and spoilers to prevent the Mission from implementing its mandate. Our peacekeepers and the Malian defence and security forces continue to serve under very difficult conditions. Far too often, they pay the ultimate price in supporting peace and stability in Mali.

Last year, Mali experienced a significant increase in improvised explosive device (IED) incidents, particularly in the centre of the country. MINUSMA and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) continue to support the Malian authorities through the provision of advice, training and specialized equipment to mitigate the risks posed by the IED threat. From September through December, Malian instructors,

previously trained by MINUSMA/UNMAS, delivered their first explosive-ordnance disposal courses to their own troops in Bamako. The training was supported by MINUSMA but entirely delivered by Malian trainers, marking a milestone in the development of national capacities and contributing to the restoration of State authority.

We remain concerned about the further deterioration of the security situation in the centre, where intercommunal violence, instrumentalized by extremist armed groups, has intensified over the past months. On 1 January, 37 members of the Fulani community were killed in an attack in the Bankass district. The authorities swiftly responded by deploying a Malian armed forces unit to the site of the incident and opening an investigation. On 4 January, President Keita visited the village where the attack took place. MINUSMA is engaging the Government to define the political parameters framing the approach in the centre and is stepping up its support to the Government in responding to the rapidly evolving situation and protecting civilians, in coordination with the United Nations country team.

With regard to security in central Mali, MINUSMA is enhancing its assistance to the Government in the protection of civilians by increasing its mobility and its presence. This approach should also enable the United Nations country team and humanitarian and development partners to intensify their contributions to peace and development. The deteriorating situation resulted in a dramatic 75 per cent increase in displaced persons in December 2018, compared with June 2018. Overall, the humanitarian situation in Mali remains dire, with 2.3 million vulnerable people targeted by the 2019 humanitarian response plan. Over 800 schools remain closed due to insecurity.

Addressing the challenges facing Mali must take into account the complex cross-border dynamics and drivers of conflict occurring within the broader regional context. I therefore reiterate the Secretary-General's call on national, regional and international actors to redouble their efforts to tackle the multiple threats facing Mali and the Sahel region.

The Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) Joint Force remains an instrumental part of the response needed to address the threat of violent extremism in the region. I wish to call on G-5 Sahel member States to take all steps necessary to resume the operations of

the Joint Force as soon as possible, and on international partners to provide it with the support it requires. In parallel, we also must redouble our efforts to address resilience, governance and development deficits in the region. In this regard, the United Nations will continue to move forward in the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

In conclusion, it is important to continue impressing on all parties to the peace agreement the importance of maintaining positive momentum in order to continue accelerating the implementation of priority measures of the peace agreement and register meaningful progress without further delay. MINUSMA, through the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, remains committed to supporting the parties in their efforts to advance the implementation of the peace agreement.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Keita for her briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Assistant-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Bintou Keita, for her informative briefing. I also would welcome the presence at this table of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, Her Excellency Ms. Kamissa Camara. Her participation in this meeting is an important gesture, and we appreciate it.

The implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali must remain the top priority. It is more than ever our guiding compass. Resolution 2423 (2018) establishes a clear framework for this by defining a specific list of measures whose implementation is expected no later than six months after the inauguration of the Malian President. That deadline will fall on 4 March, which is only a few weeks away. We are all involved in that task, so the time to act is now.

France welcomes the first concrete progress that has been made in recent weeks in implementing the measures identified in resolution 2423 (2018). I am thinking in particular of the establishment of new interim authorities; the launch of an accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process for over 1,400 combatants; the holding of a second high-level workshop towards the establishment of a reconstituted army, special anti-terrorist units and

territorial police; and the establishment of a sustainable development fund to ensure the development of the northern part of the country. I am also referring to the establishment of a weekly consultation framework among the Malian parties, which illustrates the restoring of a climate of trust and would not have been possible only a few months ago. Lastly, I am thinking of the establishment of a working group on the involvement of women in the peace process, which demonstrates the increased attention to that important objective. Those various developments are all signals that, in our view, reflect a sincere political will to step up the pace of implementing the agreement. There is therefore a positive momentum. It is now important to build on it quickly enough for Mali to be ready for the March deadline.

However, let us make no mistake. There is still much progress to be made in order to meet the expectations established by the Security Council, and there is very little time left. It is therefore our responsibility to continue to support the implementation of the agreement by mobilizing all the tools available to the international community to encourage the parties to move forward. That is precisely the purpose of the sanctions adopted by the Council on 20 December last year. In accordance with the provisions of the agreement, they seek to show that there is a specific price to be paid by those who obstruct the peace process on the ground, in particular through their links with terrorist groups or trafficking activities. Such actions have serious consequences whether in the form of a travel ban or, more broadly, complete exclusion from the peace process. France has therefore decided, in coordination with several of its partners, to suspend all contact with the listed persons until the measures taken against them are lifted, for which precise criteria have already been defined. We are also ready to propose the adoption of new listings in due course if the Council's expectations are not met.

The continuing deterioration of the situation in the centre of the country is a source of growing concern. The almost daily attacks by terrorist groups, as well as the dangerous increase in intercommunal tensions, pose a serious threat to the civilian population and the stability of the region. Restoring a State presence and authority in that area, in all its forms, is at the heart of the response to the current crisis. We welcome the recent visits by President Keita and the Prime Minister to the region and their hard work in that regard. It is essential that such efforts continue and increase.

It is also crucial that the international community provide all necessary support to the Malian Government in its integrated strategy to regain control of the centre. In particular, we expect the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to continue to support the efforts undertaken within its means and in the context of its mandate. In that regard, we believe that it is necessary in the coming weeks to reflect on the appropriate balance between the resources available to the Mission, its mandate and the needs that exist in the central part of Mali.

Finally, France would like to emphasize the fact that the stabilization of Mali and the region can be achieved only through the complementary and coordinated action of the various security forces on the ground, which all share the same objective of supporting the implementation of the agreement. The support provided by Operation Barkhane to MINUSMA during the attack on the Ber camp, the cooperation among the various security forces in combating improvised explosive devices and protecting access and, on another level, the operational and logistical support regularly shared among the various actors illustrate the great importance of that partnership approach. Resolution 2423 (2018) sent a clear message in that regard: every entity must play its individual role within the limits of its mandate, but all must coordinate and support one other on the ground in the prevailing difficult circumstances. Let us not forget that the enemies of peace have not waited for us to start cooperating among themselves.

As we collectively expressed in the adoption of resolution 2423 (2018), the urgency today is to fully implement the peace agreement. The six-month period for implementing the priority measures identified by the Council will very soon come to an end. Everyone in Mali must be aware of that and should fully mobilize in order to succeed. France will issue a press statement to that effect at the end of this meeting.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Political and Peacekeeping Affairs, for her valuable briefing on the most recent developments in the Republic of Mali. I would also like to thank and commend Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), for his efforts to reduce political tension among all

relevant parties and to facilitate the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. I also join my colleague, the representative of France, in welcoming the presence and participation of Her Excellency Ms. Kamissa Camara, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali. That is the first time that she has come to the Security Council, which reflects the interest shown by the Government of Mali in supporting the peace process in the country.

I would like to address three important aspects of the subject under discussion today: the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, the security situation and humanitarian issues.

With regard to the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, we welcome the most recent positive steps in the implementation of the peace agreement, in particular the establishment of interim administrations in the Kidal, Ménaka and Timbuktu regions and the progress made concerning the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, as well as the holding of the second high-level meeting on the implementation of the security and defence aspects of the agreement. We also welcome the decision made by His Excellency President Keita to establish a dedicated ministry in order to follow-up on the implementation of the agreement. We welcome as well the role played by His Excellency Prime Minister Maiga in ensuring that progress is made by the Government. In that regard, we urge all parties to continue their efforts to achieve the desired peace and security. We hope that there will be no further delay in implementing the peace process, as we have seen in the past. We also expect to see the implementation of the provisions of the agreement, in particular those in paragraph 4 of resolution 2423 (2018), including progress on the decentralization process and the full operationalization of the mixed units of the Operational Coordination Mechanism.

We would like to recall the road map adopted by all parties on 22 March 2018, which relates to the implementation of several aspects of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. We call on all parties to comply with the provisions of that agreed document.

We reiterate our position with regard to the fact that the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation remains the best option for resolving the ongoing conflict in Mali. We look forward to the

report of the Secretary-General requested in paragraph 6 of resolution 2423 (2018), to be issued six months after the presidential inauguration. That report would contain the most recent developments with regard to the implementation of the agreement and the benchmarks of the Pact for Peace signed by all parties. It would also contain the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General on the reconfiguration of MINUSMA in the absence of significant progress.

We also call on all parties to cooperate and to take essential decisions for the benefit of all of them. Establishing trust is a key element in implementing the peace agreement. We look forward to the holding of legislative elections later this year and we hope that all parties will participate. We are pleased to see that the preparations for those elections have already begun and that the Mission is playing a supportive role in that regard.

With regard to the security situation, we are concerned about the deterioration in security in a number of cities in Mali, particularly in the centre of the country, as Ms. Keita noted in her briefing. The central part of the country has suffered the majority of the attacks — 24 out of 64 — during the reporting period. That region also saw the massacre of 37 civilians on 1 January, in addition to more than 500 civilians who were killed in the region in 2018. That situation must be addressed in a comprehensive manner that deals with the security threats, improves governance and enhances infrastructure in the region to bring stability to central Mali and handle the root causes of the situation there. In that context, we welcome the Government's latest plan to address the situation in the central part of the country, as well as the recent visits by President Keita and Prime Minister Maïga to the region, which are indicative of their interest in achieving stability in that region.

We appreciate the role played by all the military stakeholders in Mali who are working to combat terrorism and realize stability and security in the country. We also appreciate the efforts of the national and regional military forces to address the security threats in Mali and the region. We support the regional initiatives to confront the challenges in the region, and in that regard we urge the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) to pursue its work in combating terrorism and to make use of the assistance provided by MINUSMA, in accordance with Council resolution 2391 (2017). At the same time, we appreciate

the importance of providing sustainable funding for the Joint Force. We express our readiness to discuss the various ways in which funds can be provided to the Joint Force.

Concerning humanitarian issues, we appreciate the role played by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to mitigate the suffering of the people, notwithstanding the continued deteriorating security situation as well as the increasing floods in the country. The humanitarian situation remains difficult, affecting more than 7 million people in Mali. There are difficulties in delivering basic services such as health care, water and education services. Moreover, humanitarian workers face the additional challenge of being targeted by the armed groups operating in the region.

In order to resolve the humanitarian crisis, development activities must be undertaken. We are pleased to note efforts made at the regional and international levels to support development in Mali and the region, in particular the G-5 Sahel priority investment programme, which raised €2.4 billion in pledges during Nouakchott conference on 6 December 2018; the African Union's Agenda 2063; and the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

In conclusion, we look forward to the upcoming report of the Secretary-General in preparation for the renewal of MINUSMA mandate in June, making the Mission more efficient in the current difficult environment.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): Let me thank Assistant Secretary-General Keita for her briefing and wish her well in her new role, as this is the first time that I have seen her since she took it up. I also welcome the presence of Her Excellency Foreign Minister Camara in the Security Council.

I will focus largely on the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali in my statement. The year 2018 saw renewed commitments by the Government of Mali and the signatory armed groups to the expedited and full implementation of the 2015 agreement. In March, we saw the parties commit to a road map for the implementation of priority actions. In October, the Pact for Peace was signed, recommitting to the swift and inclusive implementation of the agreement. The United Kingdom welcomes recent progress, notably the launching of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

process and the establishment of a working group on the participation of women in the peace process. We welcome the efforts of the Malian Prime Minister in support of the implementation of the agreement, including the establishment of a new Ministry.

Those developments are welcome and underscore the genuine importance that the Government attaches to the process. Having heard the Minister speak with passion and conviction, I know that she is also personally committed. However, there must be considerable and rapid further action in order to achieve the full implementation committed to by all parties to the agreement. For example, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/1174), progress is being made to establish 10 district-level interim administrations, but steps must now be taken to operationalize those interim administrations. Of the 72 civil administrators appointed in June last year, only 7, we understand, have been deployed to their duty stations. It has been three and a half years since the agreement was signed. Timelines in the March 2018 road map have passed unfulfilled.

We are encouraged by the Government's plans for 2019, and we hope that those will be successful so that the Malian people can enjoy a more peaceful and prosperous future. As Assistant Secretary-General Keita recalled and the parties to the agreement will recall, the Security Council decided last month to place three individuals on the sanctions list compiled by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) for impeding the peace process. The parties will also recall our expressed readiness to take further such measures if needed. The United Kingdom therefore reiterates its previous calls on the Government of Mali, the Platform coalition of armed groups and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad to redouble their efforts and take the additional steps needed for the immediate implementation of the agreement. As Assistant Secretary-General Keita said, there is impatience around the table concerning the missed milestones that we have heard about meeting after meeting in the Council.

Turning to the situation on the ground, we recognize the challenging circumstances in which the Malian Government and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) operate. The United Kingdom unequivocally condemns recent attacks against MINUSMA personnel and supporting contractors. We express our condolences

to the families of those who have tragically lost their lives, and we thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and all of his staff for their important work in very challenging circumstances.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned about the large numbers of civilians who continue to be affected by targeted terrorist attacks and intercommunal clashes, particularly in the centre of Mali. We welcome the steps taken by the Government of Mali to re-establish a State presence by the integrated security plan for the centre. However, in order to ensure that the root causes of instability in the centre are sustainably addressed and enable MINUSMA to provide complementary support, the United Kingdom encourages the Government to also develop a comprehensive political strategy for the centre.

The human rights situation remains concerning. However, the United Kingdom welcomes the progress that has been made in the prosecution of members of the Malian defence and security forces who have been accused of perpetrating human rights violations. In order to increase the people's confidence in those defence forces, it is critical to thoroughly investigate all human rights violations and ensure justice and accountability.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom welcomes the recent steps that have been taken to foster stability in Mali. Now is the time for further action. Rapid progress is needed with regard to the implementation of the peace agreement in a full, effective and inclusive manner, while political security and development efforts, particularly in central Mali, are intensified. The United Kingdom stands ready to support such progress. We are increasing our diplomatic presence in Mali, the Niger and Chad. We have deployed Chinook helicopters to support Operation Barkhane, which provide logistical support for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. Our Department for International Development has spent \$317 million across the Sahel in the past four to five years, and we will significantly increase our development assistance in coming years.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): For Germany, Mali is very important. We have been deeply involved in the peace process and supporting it and the country since the crisis erupted in 2012. Today, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) includes the biggest deployment of German soldiers in terms of United Nations troops, which shows our dedication to the country.

We also fully recognize the international engagement of other countries. I want to commend especially our French friends, as well as what France and Operation Barkhane are doing for the sake of the Country's security and development. I also would like to welcome Assistant Secretary-General Keita and totally support what she said, namely, that MINUSMA plays an essential role in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. MINUSMA is therefore a key actor for achieving stabilization in Mali, together with other civilian and military actors there, such as the European Union training mission, which Germany is currently is commanding.

With regard to the political process, as with any peacekeeping mission anywhere in the world, MINUSMA itself cannot supply substitutes for national political solutions but can only support their implementation. I also want to underline the positive developments that Ms. Keita enumerated in her briefing, such as in the accelerated disarmament process. However, still more progress must be made in the areas of decentralization and constitutional and security-sector reform.

I would also like to commend the positive steps that have been taken to involve women in the peace process. However, as my British colleague just said, more must be done. In that context, I would like to warmly welcome the very dedicated and passionate Foreign Minister of Mali to the Council. It is wonderful to have her here, and I would like to commend her and her Government for the efforts they have been undertaking.

It is important that State capacity be strengthened, particularly in the centre of the country. I know that the Malian Government has already done a lot there but, as Assistant Secretary-General Keita said in her briefing, the security situation in the central regions remains serious. There is a great deal to do, but as others here have said, we also need a leap forward to restore trust between the population and the Government authorities. Here I want to repeat what I have said on other occasions regarding the challenge that terrorism poses to countries. I always point to the United Nations Development Programme's 2017 study *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment*, which clearly states that the reasons that drive young people to join extremist terrorist groups include bad governance, lack of education, poverty and unemployment, which are all drivers on the journey to extremism, and Mali

still has to deal with all of that. But to repeat myself once again, we recognize what the Prime Minister and the Government are undertaking, and we of course understand the difficulties inherent in implementing all of it.

With regard to MINUSMA, we would first like to welcome the progress that has been made in increasing peacekeepers' safety and reducing casualties. We acknowledge what the Secretariat has done to implement Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz's report on *Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers*. A lot has been done in that respect, and Germany supports the implementation of the Cruz report on a bilateral level. MINUSMA remains a key security umbrella for the humanitarian development and stabilization efforts that are needed in the north. When we discuss the renewal of its mandate, we must focus on ensuring that it is realistic, achievable and capable of securing the gains that we have made in the north. We believe we should also do a better job of capitalizing on MINUSMA's civilian-military nature and better connecting it to civilian peacebuilding. That holds true for all missions.

With regard to any peace effort in Mali and the Sahel we have to look at all risk factors. The Council has probably been expecting this, but I must reiterate that the security-related effects of climate change in Mali are obvious, with herders and farmers there clashing in the wake of droughts and climate change. More conflict is being driven by climate change, and that is unfortunately also the case in Mali.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome Ms. Kamissa Camara, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, to today's meeting, and thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for her briefing.

We are pleased that on the political front, the situation in Mali has remained generally stable. We welcome the efforts by Bamako and the Platform coalition and Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad signatory groups to implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We hope that in the run-up to the assessment of the parties' implementation of the peace agreement planned for March that they will take additional steps, particularly regarding the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants and the issue of territorial and administrative

restructuring reform. If that is successfully achieved, the parliamentary elections postponed to the summer of 2019 will be held in much more favourable conditions.

We note Bamako's efforts to restore Government institutions in northern Mali. The establishment of 10 interim district-level administrations in Kidal, Ménaka and Timbuktu is unquestionably a big step forward. In our view, using the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to support the effectiveness of the work of these transitional structures would also be very helpful. The Government and MINUSMA should be more active in their outreach efforts to explain the essence and meaning of the peace agreement and the role and tasks of the United Nations Mission to the people. As time has shown, the signing in October 2018 of the Pact for Peace between Bamako and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has played a positive role in events in Mali. The fact that representatives of the Platform coalition and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad have joined it has given extra impetus to the implementation of the peace agreement and the road map.

However, we want to point out that introducing more and more new sanctions will hardly help to genuinely consolidate the Malian parties around the agreements. While we acknowledge the obvious positive advances in the Malian settlement, we feel obliged to point to other trends there that are unfortunately less encouraging. We are concerned about the continuing increase in the numbers of terrorist acts and we mourn the peacekeepers who have died in Mali. Human rights violations are ubiquitous, and inter-ethnic and intercommunal conflicts continue to simmer in central Mali. The presence of the authorities will be crucial to ensuring that they are fully resolved. In that connection, we take note of the results that the United Nations Mission has achieved in reconciling warring parties.

We are also worried about the worsening humanitarian situation. The numbers of people requiring assistance have gone up almost one and a half times over the past year. That is not normal. We call on all outside donors to fund the humanitarian appeal immediately. We should remember that in conditions of despair the only option that remains for Mali's young people is joining the ranks of terrorist, extremist or criminal groups. In that regard, it will be extremely important to ensure that efforts to stimulate economic

activity and restore social services in the central and northern areas of the country do not slow down.

We welcome the Government of Mali's eagerness to take the process into its own hands and actively advance on a path to political normalization and economic stabilization. However, we want to point out that the situation in Mali is an important factor in African security as a whole. Achieving peace there would be easier if the situation in the region as a whole were normalized. The Libya factor continues to play a negative role in this. The ties between the terrorists operating in Mali and in the region as a whole are becoming increasingly clear. In that regard, we support the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel in taking concrete steps to form a Joint Force to combat terrorism and organized crime and hope that their role in ensuring regional security will grow.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): We would like at the outset to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting. We wish also to express our sincere appreciation to Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for her comprehensive briefing on the situation in Mali. It was enlightening and also highlighted the significant progress made and the amount of work that still needs to be embarked upon.

We also welcome the presence here with us of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, Ms. Kamissa Camara, and look forward to her briefing.

I would like to focus my intervention on the four key pillars that underpin the peace process in Mali: the political process, the security situation, regional cooperation and economic development.

First, on the political process, we are encouraged by the positive developments that have been undertaken in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, as registered in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/1174) and described in the briefing we heard today from Ms. Keita. We would also like to commend President Ibrahim Keita for his leadership and Prime Minister Maïga for his mobilization in support of the implementation of the agreement. These are positive indicators of a direction towards peace.

The Council should make a positive appraisal of these encouraging developments in Mali and accompany

the country in keeping a very tight time frame towards normalization and elections later this year.

In this regard, South Africa calls on all parties to make every effort to fully implement the 2015 Mali peace agreement and the recently signed Pact for Peace, which provides an opportunity to reinvigorate the peace process in the country. As we know, this is not the first peace process in Mali, and we as the international community should provide the necessary support by creating an enabling environment to sustain peace.

We wish to recall that at its thirty-first Summit in Nouakchott, in July 2018, the African Union (AU) Assembly welcomed “the gains made in the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation” and urged “speedy progress as the only way to durable peace and security in the country”. The Assembly also welcomed the progress made by the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5) Joint Force and reiterated the AU commitment to assist in the regionally coordinated response within the framework of the Nouakchott process and other regional frameworks.

Secondly, on the security pillar, we are encouraged by the progress made in the launch of the acceleration of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process as well as security-sector reform. Furthermore, we commend the measures taken by the Malian Government in improving the working conditions of the security services. My delegation is of the view that it is vital that Mali’s security forces be given the necessary capacity, equipped and strengthened in order to address the challenges faced by the country. We believe that this will bring sustainable peace and stability to the country. Furthermore, the Force should garner the trust of the Malian people as a whole.

South Africa also recognizes the important work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the troop-contributing countries in supporting the implementation of the peace agreement as well as providing capacity-building to ensure the gradual restoration of State authority and services throughout Mali, including in the centre of the country.

Moreover, my delegation fully supports the unique partnership between MINUSMA and the G-5 Joint Force in the process of restoring peace and stability in Mali and the wider Sahel region. As has been recognized by the Council, that partnership represents positive

cooperation between a United Nations peacekeeping operation and a regional peace operation in Africa.

Thirdly, regional cooperation is a critical element in the case of Mali given the challenges it faces in terms of transnational crime and terrorist threats, which further highlights the fact that this is not only a Malian crisis. Threats to the broader region are imminent if the current challenges in Mali are not addressed and curtailed urgently. Consequently, the solidarity of the region is a critical ingredient in the creation of lasting peace throughout the Sahel.

The G-5 represents a concrete example of neighbouring countries contributing to the peace and stability of their own region. Therefore, every effort should be made by the United Nations, including the Council, and its Member States to ensure that the G-5 Joint Force is fully capacitated so that it can effectively implement its mandate. In addition, we take note of and support the Secretary-General’s recommendation that the Council establish a United Nations support office for the G-5 Joint Force.

The situation in Mali illustrates the severe asymmetrical threat faced by United Nations peacekeepers. In the context of these threats, such as terrorist attacks against United Nations personnel, the Security Council must ensure that these operations are, first, fully resourced; secondly, entrusted with the appropriate mandate to respond to the context-specific environments in which they are deployed; and, thirdly, adequately equipped to protect themselves and defend their mandate.

Fourthly, and lastly, I would like to underscore the need for economic development so as to sustain the peace we are trying to bring about in Mali. The people need to benefit from the peace dividends that result from the agreement. Ordinary people need to feel the change and be able to earn their livelihood.

It is key, therefore, that the international community support the people of Mali through economic and infrastructure investment that would help them to overcome the challenges currently facing them. This will contribute not only to a stable Mali and a stable region, but also to a peaceful and prosperous African continent.

We thank France for the press statement and reiterate that, as always, it has our support.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the presence of Foreign Minister Camara. We also thank Assistant Secretary-General Keita for her briefing.

Since taking office, President Keita has remained actively committed to pursuing the peace process in Mali. China commends the fact that Government and the people of Mali have made considerable efforts to implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and achieved positive progress. That said, in northern and central Mali the security situation continues to worsen, with rampant terrorist activities having a serious impact on the peace process in the country. The international community should continue to support peace and development in the country.

First, we should assist all parties in Mali in the implementation of the peace agreement. We hope that the signatory parties will consolidate the current positive momentum, continue to strengthen mutual trust and implement all provisions of the agreement so as to jointly engage in Mali's development and reconstruction. The international community should help Mali build its capacity in the areas of development and governance, on the basis of respect for Mali's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Council's sanctions regime in Mali should aim to support the political process in strict accordance with the Council's mandate.

Secondly, we must assist Mali in enhancing its security capacity-building, as a response to the increasingly complex security challenges in northern and central Mali and as requested by the Malian Government. The international community should continue to support and assist the Government in redoubling its security and counter-terrorism capacities so that the Government can gradually assume the responsibilities for ensuring nationwide security.

Peace and security in Mali are closely linked with the overall security situation in the surrounding region. It is imperative to take a comprehensive approach and engage in regional cooperation with a view to curbing terrorist activities within and around Mali. China welcomes the efforts of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel to take ownership in the fight against terrorism in the region, as well as other security threats. We commend all the work done by the United Nations and MINUSMA to support the Joint Force.

Thirdly, we must support the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in its ongoing work. MINUSMA and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif have played an important role and made tremendous efforts to maintain Mali's stability and strengthen its security capacity. They have done much to assist Mali's peace process. We are keen for MINUSMA to continue to stay engaged and work closely with the Government and make its active contribution.

China takes note of the vigorous measures taken by the Secretariat and MINUSMA to better guarantee the safety and security of peacekeepers. We encourage MINUSMA to continue to strengthen the security of its personnel and to ensure that all materials to guarantee security are in place, while communicating more with the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and donors so that MINUSMA is well-equipped and sufficiently funded to fulfil its mandate and practice self-defence.

China is a firm supporter of Mali's peace and development. China is an important TCC to MINUSMA, with more than 400 Chinese peacekeepers discharging their duties in MINUSMA across a broad range of functions, such as health workers, engineers, security guards and so on. Their ability to perform their duties has been widely praised. China will continue to work with the international community to contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in Mali.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in French*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting and thank Assistant-Secretary-General Bintou Keita for her briefing. Similarly, we welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, Her Excellency Ms. Kamissa Camara. We are grateful for her presence, which signifies the support of her Government for the peace process.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

We acknowledge the recent strides made in Mali, including the establishment of provisional administrations at the district level and the implementation of an accelerated process of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and integration. We also highlight the establishment of the Ministry of National Reconciliation and Social Cohesion. Peru believes that the full implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali should remain the priority for the Malian Government

and people, with the support of the international community. On the basis of that progress, it is essential that all parties pool their efforts around three core objectives, which we believe are important to prioritize.

First, with respect to the political process, we believe that it is necessary to work without delay on the political and institutional reforms required to improve governance, security and socioeconomic development, as set forth in resolution 2423 (2018) and in the Pact for Peace. It is also urgent to move forward with reforms related to the constitutional review, decentralization and upholding the rule of law. Those elements are central to the development of peaceful, transparent and inclusive legislative elections, as well as to lead to greater social cohesion.

Secondly, with regard to the fight against insecurity, we note with alarm the situation of ongoing violence and instability in various parts of the country, especially in central Mali, which is evidenced by a precarious humanitarian situation. We support the efforts being made to strengthen the Malian armed forces in order to equip them with the technical and training capabilities that will enable them to confront terrorist and rebel groups, while also counting on the trust and support of the population. It is equally important to strengthen national control over the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which triggers a continuous spiral of violence. We believe that it is also key to complement those actions with the establishment of an independent judicial system that can address human rights violations, as well as contribute to the fight against impunity and for accountability for various crimes, such as kidnapping, sexual violence and intercommunal violence.

Thirdly, in relation to the promotion of sustainable development, we highlight the efforts of the Malian Government in developing the strategic framework for economic recovery and sustainable development, and the support provided by the Peacebuilding Commission Fund to carry out projects aimed at building a peaceful and inclusive society. However, we are concerned about the inequality in economic performance between the capital Bamako and the other regions of the country. The attainment of sustainable peace will be possible only through a comprehensive approach that includes improvements in security, political dialogue and the rule of law as essential requirements to address the root causes of the conflict.

We also believe that it is indispensable to promote measures that include greater participation and empowerment of women. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of a working group on women's participation in the peace process, under the leadership of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). In the same vein, we believe that the involvement of young people in defining and building the future of their country is crucial.

In conclusion, we would like to acknowledge the role of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in strengthening the regional response to terrorism and transnational organized crime, as well as the courageous work of the MINUSMA forces in particularly difficult operational environments and situations. We reaffirm our strong support for the efforts undertaken by the Council and other regional and international actors for sustainable peace in Mali, which will be possible only with the decisive and firm leadership of the Malians themselves.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): I would also like to thank Assistant-Secretary General Keita for her comprehensive briefing on the most recent situation in Mali, and I would also like to extend our appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), as well as to all MINUSMA personnel for their work in maintaining peace and stability in Mali. I furthermore welcome to the Chamber the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, Her Excellency Ms. Kamissa Camara.

In line with resolution 2423 (2018), allow me to highlight three pertinent points with regard to supporting the peace process and development in the country.

First, Indonesia welcomes the progress achieved in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The establishment of interim administrations in northern Mali and the accelerated disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and integration process marked the good intentions of all signatory parties to deliver their obligations under the agreement. That aside, Indonesia believes that the pace of progress should be accelerated if the March 2019 deadline is to be achieved. Focus should be placed on key provisions, including the effective functioning of interim authorities, territorial and administrative

restructuring, the operationalization of the Operational Coordination Mechanism and the development of the northern development zone.

We took note of the postponement of legislative elections to 2019 and hope that the elections will proceed in a peaceful, inclusive, transparent and credible manner. We cannot overstate the importance of a political process in achieving national reconciliation and reconstruction. We therefore hope that all parties will continue to show political will to ensure the implementation of the agreement within the specified timeline.

Secondly, we remain concerned over the security situation in Mali, as detailed in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/1174). We note with concern the continuous targeting of MINUSMA by asymmetrical attacks from armed groups, as stated in the Secretary General's report, as well as the increased use of incidents involving the use of improvised explosive devices. We view it to be of crucial importance to strengthen capacities, address equipment shortfalls and ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel. We pay tribute to and our prayers are with the peacekeepers who lost their lives, as well as those who continue to risk their lives on a daily basis, even as we speak. We in Indonesia take pride in having our peacekeepers on the ground to assist our brothers and sisters in Mali.

In addition, it is important for the international community to enhance the capacities of Malian law enforcement, including police personnel, inter alia, through training and capacity-building. We appreciate efforts to promote technical assistance to the Malian specialized unit tasked with combating terrorism and transnational organized crime, as described in the report of the Secretary-General. It is also our view that State capacity should also be enhanced to ensure the presence of State authority in all areas, establish a safe environment for civilians and limit the influence of violent extremism and terrorism.

Indonesia is also deeply concerned about the humanitarian and human rights conditions in Mali, which remain precarious and continue to deteriorate. Given the interlinkage of issues, we believe that it is of crucial importance to adopt a more integrated and comprehensive approach, including by addressing the root causes of conflict and security challenges in Mali. In that regard, assistance for development and economic

recovery is much needed and we call on the international community to provide support to Mali's development agenda so as to enable it to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Economic development is in line with sustaining peace and that is an important step in helping Mali to become safe and secure.

Thirdly, peace and stability in Mali have a direct impact on the rest of the region. That is evident given the cross-border nature of many issues, including the activities of armed groups, as well as illicit arms and drug trafficking. Therefore, it is our view that lasting peace and stability in Mali can be achieved only through strengthened cooperation among all countries of the region. It is equally important to support regional and subregional organizations, as they are better positioned to address regional peace and security issues. The cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations must be enhanced to that effect, including with the members of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

With regard to United Nations engagement in Mali, we welcome the development of an integrated strategic framework. We believe that considerations concerning any future engagement by the United Nations in Mali, including the possible adjustment of MINUSMA, should take into account Mali's national priorities and institutional capacities. We believe that this is important to ensure that the progress thus far achieved can be maintained, while ensuring the long-term stability of the country. Indonesia remains committed to playing a constructive role in the achievement of lasting peace and stability in Mali.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin my statement today by expressing our strong rejection and condemnation of the terrorist attack that took place at the Dusit complex in Nairobi, which left at least 14 people dead and many injured. We extend our deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of Kenya for the lives lost and convey our condolences to the families affected.

As this is the first time that I am taking the floor since the Dominican Republic began its presidency, I should like to personally congratulate you, Sir, on your skilful guidance of the work on the Security Council's agenda this month. I again commend the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire for the very able and successful manner in which it presided over the Council in December. I also welcome the newly elected members of the Council

that have joined us in our noble work to maintain international peace and security.

We welcome Her Excellency Ms. Kamissa Camara, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, to New York.

(spoke in French)

I wish her every success in her post that carries great responsibility and a pleasant stay in New York. I thank her very much for her briefing.

(spoke in Spanish)

As the delegations that have taken the floor before me have underscored, the loss of State authority in central and northern Mali continues to have security consequences. Despite strong international support and mobilization for the full implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, the situation in the country remains very worrisome. The security situation in northern and central Mali remains critical. There is ongoing intercommunal violence among ethnic groups, in particular the Fulani, the Bambara and the Dogon. A unilateral ceasefire announced in October 2018 by the Dogon Dan Nan Ambassagou militia was not upheld and clashes continued. Terrorist groups take advantage of such tensions to increase recruitment and attempt to gain legitimacy in their communities.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea would again like to strongly condemn the ongoing attacks perpetrated against the Blue Helmets, United Nations personnel, the Malian armed forces and, above all, civilians. We express our gratitude and pay a well-deserved tribute to all defence forces — national and international alike — that take part in the heroic effort to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime in Mali and throughout the Sahel. It should be emphasized that, since the establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali in 2013, 106 peacekeepers have lost their lives, alongside members of the Malian army and the civilian population. In spite of the challenging conditions, we welcome the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and highlight its determination to build peace and promote social cohesion by funding and implementing various projects, such as the recent construction and development of agricultural infrastructure in the Gao region.

Given the discouraging context I have described, we encourage the Government of Mali, the Platform coalition of armed groups and Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad to accelerate the implementation of key provisions of the peace agreement, which are emphasized in resolution 2423 (2018). In that regard, we welcome the implementation of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and integration process, which should allow the army to be better prepared and equipped to boost security in northern and central Mali, where jihadists operate. We also welcome the establishment of the Ministry for Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation, which faithfully reflects the political will of Bamako to institutionalize its efforts to ensure the full implementation of the agreement. We call on the international community to support the efforts of the Government because the solution to the current situation in this brotherly country lies in fully implementing the peace agreement, which is the key.

On the path to peace and stability in Mali, it is important that all political actors and other signatory parties understand that now is not the time for backtracking or undermining the progress achieved following so many years of conflict. They must instead be resolved to prioritize and support all initiatives aimed at ensuring a prosperous future for the people of Mali. In that regard, it is essential to recall that the Pact for Peace expresses the commitment of the parties to giving powerful momentum to the implementation of the peace agreement and serves as a catalyst for strengthening the inclusive nature of the political process. We therefore emphasize the importance of including all political and social agents associated with the signatory armed movements in the decision-making processes on political and institutional reforms.

We believe that it is always appropriate, when considering the situation in Mali and in the Sahel, to emphasize the nexus between security, governance and development, among other factors, because in the long term terrorism will be totally defeated only by addressing its root causes.

In accordance with the press release issued by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on 17 December 2018, we reaffirm the multidimensional nature of the challenges facing Mali and the region, because counteracting the terrorist threat requires a comprehensive approach that pools efforts in the field of security and ongoing development and the improvement

of the socioeconomic conditions of the populations of the regions that are facing terrorist activities, which feed on fragile conditions and difficulties, especially among young people, in the context of efforts to address the root causes of extremism.

We reiterate the crucial role of women's empowerment and girls' education programmes in long-term efforts to combat violent extremism and terrorism.

I conclude by paying a sincere tribute to the hard and commendable work being carried out by His Excellency President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and the Government of Mali for the return of stability and State authority to Mali. One result of this effort is the situation in Kidal, in the north of Mali, where all political parties were able to come together during the latest presidential elections to carry out their political proselytizing in total peace and harmony.

(spoke in French)

We also wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to France for Operation Barkhane, which is working with Mali in these efforts.

(spoke in Spanish)

In that regard, we thank and commend Ms. Keita for her briefing and her endeavour, alongside the peacekeeping operation, to restore peace to Mali.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Let me begin by thanking Assistant-Secretary-General Bintou Keita for her very informative briefing on recent developments in Mali.

(spoke in French)

I also welcome the presence among us of Her Excellency Ms. Kamissa Camara, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

(spoke in English)

I would like to focus my intervention around three issues: the political process, the security situation and the human rights and humanitarian situation.

First, on the political process, we commend steps taken by the Government of Mali and the Platform and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad to deliver on their remaining obligations under the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, including the creation of the Ministry for Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation. However, lasting peace and stability cannot be established without inclusive and sustainable

development. Therefore, we call on all parties to redouble their efforts to implement key provisions of the agreement so as to improve security conditions and establish sustainable development, including access to basic social services.

The full and timely implementation of the agreement will require strong support across Malian society. In that regard, we welcome the broad endorsement for the Pact for Peace signed by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the Government. We call on all stakeholders to join the Government in its efforts to move forward on the critical political and institutional reforms necessary for improved governance and sustaining peace. The meaningful inclusion and participation of individuals, especially women and youth, remains essential to securing the progress already made.

Secondly, we remain seriously concerned about the security situation in Mali, particularly in the centre. This situation needs to be urgently addressed through a more integrated and comprehensive approach so as to prevent further deterioration. Therefore, we call on the Government to step up its efforts to address the root causes of conflict and security challenges in affected areas. We hope that the implementation of adequate national strategies and plans — including the integrated security plan for the centre — will prove its efficiency in this context.

We strongly condemn the attacks against civilians in the village of Koulogon Peul in Mali and call for the perpetrators to be held accountable. If the situation in Mali is to improve, the effective implementation of the peace agreement will be crucial. We express our deep condolences to the families of the victims.

Thirdly, with respect to human rights, we remain seriously concerned about the human rights situations, particularly in the centre of the country in the Ségou and Mopti regions, as well as along the border of the Timbuktu, Gao and Ménaka regions, where serious human rights violations and abuses continue to be reported. Let me reiterate that all national and international military forces operating in Mali must ensure that their operations comply with international human rights law and international humanitarian law. No effort should be spared to hold the perpetrators of human rights violations accountable.

We are deeply concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Access to basic services and

assistance, such as food, water and sanitation, shelter, as well as education and health care, remain limited and challenging. Therefore, we call on the signatory and other armed groups to engage in dialogue with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mahamet Saleh Annadif, and the United Nations country team to improve humanitarian access.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that Mali's stability remains key to that of the whole Sahel region. Therefore, Poland commends Special Representative Annadif for his excellent leadership and all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their continued hard work in a challenging environment.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, and like the delegation of Equatorial Guinea, allow me to offer my delegation's condolences to the Government and the people of Kenya following yesterday's terrorist attack, which claimed numerous victims.

My delegation welcomes the presence among us of Ms. Kamissa Camara, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, to whom we extend our warmest congratulations on her appointment to her high office, as well as our ardent wishes for success in the lofty mission that has been entrusted to her.

We thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for her excellent introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (S/2018/1174), as well as the multifaceted support of the United Nations Multidimensional Mission for Stabilization in Mali (MINUSMA) in pursuit of lasting peace and stability in that country, in accordance with resolution 2423 (2018).

The Secretary-General's report inspires my delegation to comment on the political, security and humanitarian situations in Mali.

Côte d'Ivoire notes with interest the Secretary-General's assessment of the actions take by the Malian parties towards the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation emanating from the Algiers process, which remains essential to achieving a sustainable end to the crisis in Mali. In that regard, it welcomes the creation of the Ministry for Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation as an institutional tool that will lead to better coordination

of Government action in the operationalization of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. My country urges Malian political actors, as well as civil society, to further coordinate their efforts to bring about a lasting return to peace and stability in Mali, particularly in the northern and central regions.

The Pact for Peace, signed on 15 October, which calls for a more inclusive approach to the peace process, as well as the commitment of the signatory armed groups to adhere to an accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process and the integration process of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, are encouraging signals. In that context, it is essential that the efforts of local actors receive the continued support of the international community, including the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States and the independent observer, who must maintain their level of engagement in support of peace in Mali. My country encourages the Malian authorities to capitalize on the positive momentum of the presidential election, with a view to organizing legislative elections, which will further entrench democracy in Mali.

On the security front, Côte d'Ivoire shares the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General on the situation in the northern and central regions of Mali, in particular where attacks by extremist groups and recurrent episodes of community violence undermine the social balance that is the foundation for peaceful coexistence among the people of the region. Human rights violations by extremist groups and the emergence of self-defence groups unquestionably undermine all efforts by the Malian Government and the international community to restore peace and stability to those regions.

That situation requires urgent action by the Council to redeploy police and judicial institutions in order to enable the Malian State to fully assume its sovereign functions. Côte d'Ivoire therefore calls for continued MINUSMA support for the capacity-building of the Malian armed forces and police, as well as their redeployment to ensure the protection of civilians in affected areas. Those measures must be accompanied by strengthening judicial institutions, particularly those specializing in the fight against terrorism and organized crime.

It is also important to give greater impetus to the DDR process and security sector reform, which are

essential for reducing violence and building a Malian army as a tool for peace and stability. To that end, my country welcomes the launch, on 6 November, of the ad hoc accelerated DDR process, which has enabled the integration of combatants from the signatory groups. In turn, they will ensure the security of the DDR process, under the control of the Technical Commission on Security, and will participate in armed action against terrorist groups.

The difficult humanitarian situation, which, according to the Secretary-General's report, could affect 7.2 million people in 2019, remains a matter of serious concern. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the assistance provided by specialized agencies. However, we remain convinced that multifaceted responses to humanitarian challenges must be part of an approach based on promoting economic development, including combating poverty and unemployment — the underlying, general causes of insecurity and instability in the Sahel. In that connection, it is fitting to welcome the launch of the Alliance for the Sahel and the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel, which aim to intensify and better coordinate support to the States of the region in order to bring about shared prosperity and a secure environment in northern Mali and the Sahel region.

My country commends the combined efforts of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) member States and international donors, which made it possible, at the conference held in Nouackchott on 6 December, to mobilize €2.4 billion to finance the 40 key projects included in the 2019-2020 Priority Investment Programme.

MINUSMA, an essential pillar of the current security framework in Mali and the region, deserves the continued support of our Council. The complementarity of its actions with the various forces involved, namely, the Malian armed forces, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, Operation Barkhane and the European missions, is a major asset in the fight against terrorism and organized crime throughout the region. We therefore consider it imperative to enhance its capacity to react effectively and even anticipate attacks against its civilian and military personnel.

The terrorist attacks spreading to neighbouring countries are a reminder that, well beyond Mali's borders, the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime is a regional security issue. To that

end, it requires coordinated efforts by all regional and international actors.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the unity of the Council and the continued mobilization of the international community in support of MINUSMA, as well as its logistical and operational support to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, in accordance with resolution 2391 (2017). We reiterate our call for the Security Council to strengthen its support for the Malian Government.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its conviction and confidence in the Malian people and Government to make the Malian people's yearning for peace, stability and prosperity a reality. We support the press statement proposed by France.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Keita for her briefing today. I would also like to thank Foreign Minister Camara for participating in today's meeting.

Sadly, this has been a very difficult reporting period for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Over the past three months, the Mission saw two peacekeepers killed and 42 injured, and three contractors killed and nine injured. That is a sobering reminder to those of us in the Chamber that MINUSMA remains the most dangerous peacekeeping mission in the world. The United States recognizes the risks that the soldiers and civilians of MINUSMA face, and we pay tribute to those who have paid the ultimate price and to all the soldiers, civilians and their families who sacrifice daily to bring peace and stability to the people of Mali.

In addition to those attacks against the United Nations mission, we continue to witness heinous acts of violence against civilians and security forces, especially in the centre of the country. The United States strongly condemns the terrorist groups and the so-called self-defence groups for that growing violence. While we welcome the Government's efforts to address the deteriorating security situation in the centre, we call on the Government of Mali and MINUSMA to hasten their efforts to protect civilians, work to end intercommunal conflict and quickly hold accountable and bring to justice those responsible for these violent acts.

Every civilian, peacekeeper and security force member killed and injured underscores the need to fully implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and swiftly implement the provisions of

resolution 2423 (2018). The United States recognizes that some progress has been made since the presidential elections last summer. We commend the establishment of 10 district-level interim administrations and greater coordination between the Government and the signatory parties. We also commend the accelerated disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and integration process of the Operational Coordination Mechanism elements in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu. However, we understand there have been some issues regarding living conditions and next steps for those units. We look forward to hearing more about the Government of Mali's plans for utilizing the newly integrated armed group fighters to secure northern Mali.

We are frustrated and disappointed that more is not being done to quickly implement the provisions specified in paragraph 4 of resolution 2423 (2018). In October, we made it very clear (see S/PV.8376) that resolution 2423 (2018) demands that signatory parties must show significant progress, or face changes to MINUSMA after the expiration of the mandate. We repeat that today. There is more to be done.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for her briefing, all the more valuable as it was informed by her recent visit to Mali. I would also like to welcome the Malian Foreign Minister, Ms. Kamissa Camara, who is participating in a Security Council meeting for the first time.

I would like to begin by paying tribute to the memory of Malian and foreign staff and soldiers who lost their lives in Mali, whether they were civilian victims or died while deployed on mission.

The implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, signed in Bamako in May and June 2015, is the cornerstone for a sustainable solution to the crisis in Mali. That commitment undertaken by Malian parties, supported by the international community, must lead to a comprehensive, good-faith implementation of the various provisions of the agreement. Belgium is greatly concerned about the delays in its implementation, which undermines peace, stability, development and reconciliation in Mali. Worse still, it allows violence to spread, be it in central Mali or the subregion. In accordance with their own commitment in the road map of last March, I therefore solemnly call on the three Malian parties

to the agreement, but also all stakeholders, to redouble their efforts and show courage to ensure that the provisions of the agreement become a reality, despite the difficulties and obstacles, which, I am aware, are sometimes significant.

At the same time, I would like to welcome all the progress made since 2015, including the most recent, such as the establishment of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the redeployment of part of the territorial administration in the north of the country. I also welcome the establishment of a working group on the participation of women in the peace process, under the leadership of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which is a step towards more inclusive implementation of the agreement. It is also essential to ensure that the measures taken in implementation of the peace agreement are sustainable and receive the necessary funding to ensure their sustainability.

Finally, given the centrality of the peace agreement, I would like to stress that Belgium welcomes the sanctions imposed on those who hinder the implementation of the agreement. Belgium will not oppose new sanctions in the future if they prove necessary.

Let me stress two essential conditions for the return of lasting peace: respect for human rights and, more specifically, the fight against impunity.

Part of the Mopti and Ségou regions, in central Mali, remain affected by violence that shows no signs of waning. In addition to terrorist acts, intercommunity violence appears to be on the rise. That phenomenon is worrisome in a country such as Mali, which is historically a country of diversity and peaceful coexistence. Terrorists and aggressive militias must not be allowed to take root. I therefore encourage the Government to exercise its sovereign authority by ensuring the security of its population with the strictest respect for human rights, as Mali undertook to do in January 2018 during its Universal Periodic Review before the Human Rights Council.

With the courage and responsibility they assumed, which deserves respect, the Malian authorities publicly acknowledged, on 19 June 2018, the existence of mass graves involving certain members of the Malian armed forces and announced the opening of a judicial inquiry. We call on Mali to continue its efforts to open and conclude the investigation. I also welcome the fact that

the International Commission of Inquiry has begun its activities, and I encourage all parties involved to cooperate fully with its work. I also hope that MINUSMA — within the limits of its mandate — will act in support of the authorities and also protect civilians from the violence.

More generally, as the Council regularly points out, the solution cannot be related only to security, although that is essential. The aspirations expressed in terms of governance and social services deserve to be heard. Living together, the refusal to stigmatize specific ethnic groups, local mediation and combating impunity must all support the security response. Only Malians hold the key, and MINUSMA must support them in those efforts.

Belgium welcomes the development of an integrated strategic framework by MINUSMA and the United Nations country team. We call for its finalization as soon as possible. It is essential that the resources available to the United Nations as a whole in Mali be used to the fullest and in the most efficient and integrated way possible. Similarly, Belgium remains attentive to the integrated nature of MINUSMA and encourages all pillars to work together closely. Finally, allow me to commend the efforts of all Mission staff, and in particular Special Representative Annadif.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Dominican Republic.

First of all, I would like to thank Ms. Bentiu Keita, Assistant-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for her briefing. We urge her and all the actors on the ground to continue their efforts in the search for peace and stability in the Republic of Mali. Those are the conditions that will make it possible to lay the groundwork for the country's economic and social development. We would also like to thank Her Excellency Ms. Kamissa Camara, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, for being with us.

We know that the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali has faced major challenges in establishing the necessary conditions for peace and lasting stability in the country. However, we must acknowledge that renewed commitment by the parties has made it possible for the adoption of certain measures, including the establishment of an accelerated process of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration

and integration and the establishment of the Ministry of Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation. That has made it possible to undertake initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of women in the peace process. All those political and institutional measures and other measures to strengthen security are aimed at accelerating the implementation of a peace process that is more inclusive and that is in full compliance with the peace agreement.

We would like to commend the people and the Government of Mali, as well as MINUSMA and other stakeholders, for achieving that progress. However, it is also important to address the increase in attacks that occurred in the country during the last few months of 2018. The attacks illustrate the deterioration of the security situation in the central part of the country and the need to take immediate steps. We are particularly concerned by the increase in attacks launched by extremist groups in the central and northern regions of the country against MINUSMA, against the Malian defence and security forces and against other international forces.

In addition to those attacks, we are seeing acts of intimidation, kidnapping and selective killings of civilians and members of armed groups that are signatories of the peace agreement, especially in the centre of the country. Also, we are seeing intercommunal violence and fighting in the central parts of Mali. We emphatically condemn all attacks on civilians, especially on women and children. We express our condolences to the families of the victims. We would also like to state our rejection of all violations of international human rights standards and international humanitarian law. We will make all the necessary efforts to ensure that those responsible for violations are brought to justice.

Furthermore, we acknowledge the importance of the work of France, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), the European Union and MINUSMA, as well as the Malian defence and security forces. Their efforts to protect civilians, neutralize armed groups and prosecute those responsible for the crimes I mentioned. We urge the international community to provide financial support to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force and ensure that its troops are well equipped. We commend MINUSMA for its commitment and dedication to protecting civilians, even under difficult circumstances, as well as the technical assistance provided to the legal authorities of Mali in terms of

combating terrorism and transnational crime, logistical support and support in investigating and training police and human rights training.

We also continue to be concerned about the humanitarian needs of the population. According to the 2019 humanitarian response plan, it is estimated that, owing to the armed conflict, crime and severe flooding, approximately 7.2 million people will be affected, of which 3.2 million will require humanitarian assistance. We call for continued support for the humanitarian response plan in order to improve access to humanitarian assistance and basic services for the most vulnerable.

The Dominican Republic would like to express its concern about the effects of climate change regarding the deterioration of lands and food insecurity, which have a direct impact on stability in Mali. As expressed by the Security Council, such land deterioration undermines the means of subsistence and leads to a struggle for available resources. We believe that climate change has become one of the main challenges both for the population and for the Government. In that regard, we reiterate the need to tackle the adverse effects of climate change, environmental changes and natural disasters. It is also important that the Government of Mali and the United Nations take into account the appropriate risk assessment and risk management strategies regarding those factors in order to overcome that major challenge.

In conclusion, we reiterate that the immediate implementation of the basic provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali is essential to prevent conflict and to uphold human rights. We urge the parties, the entire population of Mali and the international community to continue this dialogue to ensure that the parties live up to the responsibility of complying with the road map and make Mali a country where peace, stability and the development of its people prevail.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Kamissa Camara, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

Ms. Kamissa (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first to extend to you, Mr. President, the warm congratulations of the delegation of Mali on the assumption by your country, the Dominican Republic, to the presidency of the Security Council for the

month of January. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in that regard. I would like to reiterate my warm congratulations and best wishes to South Africa, Germany, Belgium, Indonesia and the Dominican Republic in the execution of their terms as new members of the Council. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the delegations of Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands and Sweden and to thank them for their valuable contributions to the pursuit of international peace and security.

This meeting gives me the welcome opportunity to reiterate to all members of the Security Council, Secretary-General António Guterres and all United Nations staff who deal with Mali the deep appreciation of the President of the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, and the Government and the people of Mali for their continued commitment to peace and security in Mali, the Sahel and the rest of the world.

The delegation of Mali takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/1174) under consideration. I congratulate Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, on her brilliant briefing and updates since the issuance of the report. I also take note of the comments and high expectations that Council members have just expressed. I would now like to share the observations of the Government of Mali on the report in terms of progress made, the major challenges encountered and the prospects for the coming months in the context of the process of ending the crisis in our country.

I would therefore like to begin by affirming that the President of the Republic of Mali, the Government, the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Platform coalition of armed groups remain fully committed to the diligent and inclusive implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process. Today, I am pleased to say that the Government and the signatory movements are now a single Malian party, which speaks with one voice and is determined to ensure peace for the benefit of our people, who have suffered six years of a multifaceted crisis. That common will of the Malian parties to ensure peace in our country continues to demonstrate real progress, and I am pleased that the report under consideration has acknowledged those encouraging advances.

As part of the political and institutional reforms, the period was therefore marked by the reaffirmation of the Head of State's resolve to revise the Constitution in order to assume responsibility for certain relevant provisions of the agreement and to adapt our institutional practices to the current realities. In order to achieve that, at the Council of Ministers on 20 December 2018, the Head of State instructed the Prime Minister, Head of Government, to initiate the constitutional review and the necessary institutional reforms as part of a consensual and inclusive process.

In accordance with that presidential instruction, the Prime Minister set up a committee of experts to undertake the constitutional review. In that regard, we plan to hold the referendum on the revision of the Constitution in the first quarter of 2019, the legislative elections in May/June 2019 and the local elections in July 2019. I should say that, in order to achieve reforms acceptable to our people, the Government has also started consultations with political and societal actors, including the signatory movements, with a view to reaching a consensus on those reforms.

At the same time, consultations on the territorial division project continue in order to bring our administrative structures closer to our people and their needs. I am pleased that the Secretary-General has noted that the percentage of civil administrators and other State representatives in the northern and central regions has slightly increased over the reporting period, from 31 per cent to 34 per cent.

In the area of defence and security, I am pleased to note that the ongoing security sector reform has resulted in the registration of combatants of armed movements, with a total of 32,908 troops and, in terms of weapons and ammunition, 5,943 submachine guns, 3,736 rifles, 990 machine guns, 473 pistols, 225 rockets, 490 heavy weapons, 6 122-mm missiles, 39 improvised explosive devices, 3,177 grenades, 201 shells and more than 85,000 munitions.

That operation was followed by the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process of the Operational Coordination Mechanism elements, launched on 6 November 2018 with the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The operation made it possible to register and to disarm 1,423 of the planned 1,600 combatants from two signatory movements and other armed groups. Those

disarmed combatants will go through an upgrading phase before being redeployed to take on the tasks of the Operational Coordination Mechanism, namely, ensuring the security of the rest of the DDR process in a climate that, as members know, is difficult. I welcome the cooperation of MINUSMA, which has contributed significantly to the success of the process.

On the same topic, I would like to underline that the security sector reform process also led to the holding of a high-level workshop on security sector reform in Bamako from 12 to 14 December 2018, during which the key issues that had remained outstanding for three years were addressed in order to obtain a consensual response that would allow for progress. That relates in particular to the concepts of a reconstituted army, special units and territorial police. The exact details and the specific content of those concepts have been established. There are also modalities for the return of the Malian armed forces to the northern regions, which were decided upon in accordance with the relevant provisions of the agreement and the texts and principles governing the defence and security forces of Mali. The draft decrees on the conditions of graduation and the conditions for the return of former elements of the Malian armed forces are now available. In the same vein, the Government decided to establish a border guard to better monitor Mali's seven borders.

With regard to economic and social development, during the period under review the Government allocated an additional \$6 million to enable the interim authorities to finance projects envisioned in their priority action plans, including the water supply system for the city of Kidal, the construction of six schools and six water points in the Ménaka region and the establishment of three camel meat and milk processing plants in the Taoudenni region.

In the context of the national reconciliation, the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission is pursuing its mission throughout the country, particularly in the regions affected by the crisis. Since January 2017, more than 10,000 people have testified before the Commission.

Needless to say, the progress made in the implementation of the agreement has not led us to lose sight of the worrying security situation in the centre of Mali. Terrorist groups are fuelling and fanning the flames of intercommunal violence in the Mopti and Ségou regions, against the backdrop of assumptions and

tensions over water resources, animal routes to grazing areas and the fields of farmers practicing sedentary farming. Considering the full scope of the gravity of the situation, which unfortunately continues to inflict losses on our people, the President of the Republic visited the bereaved families in the village of Koulongo on 4 January following several such visits by the Prime Minister to those two regions.

Rapid and robust measures have been taken to halt such intercommunal clashes, including dynamic efforts tied to the implementation of the integrated security plan for the centre, with particular emphasis on strengthening security arrangements in those regions, especially through the 2018 deployment of 13,000 men, half of whom were deployed in the centre of the country; the creation of 16 new security posts; the enrolment of more than 600 young people from those regions in a special programme for reducing intercommunal violence, including a tailored disarmament, demobilization and reintegration component, which has so far led to the recovery of 444 weapons; the disarmament of all militias by late January; and development activities and the provision of basic social services for the benefit of our people, with a view to achieving a lasting resolution of the crisis. Similarly, the Government is working to improve the management of pastoral routes so as to minimize the risk of tensions among herders and farmers.

The tragic events of Koulongo, like the other crimes committed in the central part of Mali, will not go unpunished. As of now, I can inform the Council that seven people have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the Koulongo massacre, and investigations continue to identify and bring to justice all those responsible and their accomplices. I must add that, during the same period, an additional 24 people were arrested in connection with a similar attack in Bobosso, a neighbouring village of Koulongo. However, we are aware that security measures alone will not suffice, especially in an environment in which terrorist groups are working relentlessly to destroy social cohesion and weaken the State with a view to expanding their territorial domination. We have therefore also planned to focus on political, administrative and social work with the involvement of all the vital forces of our country, including political, traditional and religious leaders and national frameworks so as to build a national consensus, first, to identify those who benefit

from such crimes, and, secondly, to find solutions in which the entire Malian nation can participate.

With regard to the human rights situation, Mali welcomes the decrease in the total number of cases of human rights violations. The Government is aware of its primary responsibility to protect the population. It will therefore continue to make the efforts necessary to ensure the safety of the people and their property throughout the entire country. The 14 per cent of human rights violations attributed to the Malian defence and security forces, as indicated in paragraph 36 of the report of the Secretary-General, have already been subject to administrative and disciplinary measures, and relevant investigations are under way to attribute responsibility and bring the alleged perpetrators to justice so that they can be held accountable before the competent national tribunals.

As the Council is aware, a lasting solution to the crisis cannot be limited to security considerations alone. In that regard, it is necessary to pursue efforts aimed at dealing with development issues so as to improve the living conditions of the population throughout the country. The legal and institutional framework of the sustainable economic development fund is now complete, providing a relevant tool for the implementation of the economic component of the agreement, without which the peace dividends benefiting citizens would be negligible. That measure will enable structuring investments, the financing of the local economy and basic social services under the project ownership of the communities concerned, administered by interim authorities and transitional institutions set up under the peace agreement, pending the holding of local and regional elections and following the planned institutional reforms.

As Council members are also aware, the crisis in Mali entails repercussions for the region that fall under the mandate of the Sahel Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), the current operational level of which is very encouraging. Like the other G-5 Sahel countries, Mali will continue to provide its full support to that organization, which is enjoying increased support from its partners, as was demonstrated by the holding of the conference in Nouakchott on 6 December 2018, at which pledges totalled €2.4 billion — €500 million more than originally sought. While reiterating the gratitude of the Government of Mali for that show of solidarity, I echo the call of the G-5 Sahel Heads of State and the Secretary-General for a robust mandate

under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and for predictable and sustainable funding for the activities of the Joint Force, including through the United Nations.

As Council members can see, the Malian parties are focused on the diligent and inclusive implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, emanating from the Algiers process. We will continue to work together to provide appropriate follow-up to the relevant provisions of resolution 2423 (2018), in particular paragraph 4, so as to achieve further progress in view of the Secretary-General's next report and the Security Council's planned visit to Mali in March.

In conclusion, I firmly reiterate that the implementation of the agreement continues to progress meaningfully, although I am aware that the achievements are fragile and that the challenges facing our peace process are immense. The security situation in the Mopti and Ségou regions remains today a priority concern of the President of the Republic, the Government and all the vital forces of the Malian nation. The measures I have just presented are likely to bring lasting peace and stability to the northern and central regions of Mali.

On both fronts, Mali and its people require the support and solidarity of the international community.

On both fronts, Mali and its people require the continued support of the Secretary-General and the Security Council. I know that the members of the Security Council have contributed enormously to the peace process under way in my country, particularly through MINUSMA. I take this opportunity to commend the outstanding work that MINUSMA is doing on the ground under the able leadership of Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of MINUSMA, and to convey the same sentiments to all the women and men of MINUSMA, who are working in conditions that, I know, are very difficult. I pay tribute to all the civilian, military, foreign and Malian victims of the Malian crisis, who have fallen on the field of honour in our country. I reiterate the gratitude of the Government and the people of Mali to the French forces of Operation Barkhane, to the troop-contributing countries of MINUSMA and to all the multilateral and bilateral partners for their unwavering support for a lasting and definitive settlement to the Malian crisis.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.