



## PRESS RELEASE

### **38<sup>th</sup> HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF HEADS OF UN MISSIONS**

**Dakar, 12 September 2023** - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Leonardo Santos Simao, hosted, on 12 September 2023 in Dakar, Senegal, the 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of the United Nations Missions.

The objective of the meeting was to take stock of political and security situation, as well as development and governance-related issues and trends across the Sahel, West and Central Africa regions. The meeting particularly aimed to agree on ways to recalibrate the UN approach and review its strategic engagement to better address the multifaceted challenges, and safeguard principles of democratic governance, rule of law and restoration of confidence in Governments, including in the context of relevant African instruments adopted by the African Union and other Regional economic communities/regional mechanisms. The meeting also provided an opportunity to exchange views on the principle of subsidiarity, complementarity and comparative advantages, to allow more appropriate responses to crisis between the UN and the regional organisations.

In attendance at the bi-annual meeting were the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), El-Ghassim Wane; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), Parfait Onanga-Anyanga; the Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel, Abdoulaye Mar Dieye; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), Abdou Abarry; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Abdoulaye Bathily; and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Giovanie Biha.

The Heads of Missions discussed the overall political, security, development and socio-economic trends in West Africa and the Sahel, as well as wider developments in Central Africa and Libya. They also reflected on topics related to political transitions, violent extremism and intercommunal dynamics, particularly in the Liptako-Gourma region where security and humanitarian situations remain very complex, as well as the ongoing withdrawal of MINUSMA

from Mali. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Heads of Missions to assess the effectiveness of the United Nations in the face of multiple challenges to multilateralism across Africa and beyond.

The Heads of Missions expressed their concerns over the political and security developments in the Sahel, West and Central Africa regions, with particular reference to the multiple unconstitutional changes of governments and stressed the need for the early restoration of constitutional order in line with relevant African normative instruments and UN pronouncements.

While acknowledging the specificities of each context, they underlined the need for renewed efforts to foster good governance and transparency, in order to promote lasting stability. In this respect, they pledged to enhance the partnership between the UN and African regional and subregional organizations in the area of governance, based on their respective comparative advantages.

They highlighted the essential role of political parties, civil society and community-based organisations, in the promotion and exercise of good governance and recognized the responsibility of the United Nations to provide support in that regard. They also expressed the need to leverage on the opportunities of the region, through scaled up investments for the much-needed transformation of the economies and realization of the aspirations of the peoples.

The Heads of Missions agreed that key concerns in complex settings should embrace both humanitarian and development support as the latter is directly affected in the long run if unattended to, resulting in recurrency, as a root cause of instability.

The meeting insisted on the importance of the separation of powers, and checks and balances mechanisms, including during constitutional review processes and transition periods. Reiterating the relevance of the nexus approach to peace and security, humanitarian and development, they called for more inclusive societies and a fairer global economic and financial system that favour developing countries and the attainment of the SDGs, and the implementation of AU Agenda 2063.

###

**Bureau de la Communication Stratégique et de l'Information Publique / Strategic Communications and Public Information Office**

Kouider Zerrouk, Chef de bureau / SCPIO Chief – (+221) 33 869 85 60 / 77 332 49 28 – [zerrouk@un.org](mailto:zerrouk@un.org)

Angelita Mendy Diop, Chargée de communication / Public Information Officer – (+221) 33 869 85 47 / 76 721 78 92 – [mendya@un.org](mailto:mendya@un.org)

Alpha Ciré Kane, Public Information Assistant / Webmaster – (+221) 869 8585 / 77 528 0985 – [alpha.kane@un.org](mailto:alpha.kane@un.org)

● [www.unowas.unmissions.org](http://www.unowas.unmissions.org) ● Facebook.com/UNOWAS ● Twitter.com/UN\_UNOWAS

Ngor, route de la plage – PO Box 23 851, Dakar Ponty (Sénégal)