

## FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ

### **Eighteen High-Level Meeting of Heads of United Nations Peace Missions in West Africa**

**UNOWA – Dakar, 25 February 2010** - The Heads of United Nations Peace Missions in West Africa held their XVIIIth High-level meeting on 25 February 2010 in Dakar, under the Chairmanship of Said Djinnit, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRS) for West Africa (UNOWA). The meeting was attended by Ellen Margrethe Løj, SRS for Liberia (UNMIL); M. Y. J. Choi, SRS for Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), M. Joseph Mutaboba SRS for Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS); and Michael von der Schulenburg, ERS for Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL).

The Heads of Mission exchanged views on the recent political developments in the sub-region, including the situation in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Niger, Guinea and Togo. They emphasized that a crisis in any of the countries has the potential to impact and destabilize the sub-region. The Heads of Mission highlighted the importance of peaceful and fair elections process and security sector reform (SSR), as stabilization factors. They welcomed the creation on 19 February 2010, of a Regional Forum of SSR practitioners in close coordination with ECOWAS. The Forum facilitated by the UN will support ECOWAS in defining a West African framework and plan of action for security sector governance and reform.

The threats posed by cross-border organized crime and drug trafficking were also discussed. The Heads of Mission were updated on the latest developments in the implementation of the multi-agency West African Coast Initiative (WACI), as a follow-up to the ECOWAS Action Plan on Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime. This included the recent Freetown Ministerial Conference of 17 February which ended the initial assessment phase of the project. The UN Representatives raised serious concerns about the issue of funding that is crucial for ensuring its successful execution.

The participants were briefed on the 10th anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 in the framework of the Secretary General's campaign to end violence against women. In this context, the meeting encouraged joint initiatives such as the mapping of best practices in the implementation of Resolution 1325 including within peace missions, combating sexual abuse and violence; and the domestication and implementation of CEDAW in West Africa.

\*\*\*\*\*

*For more information: Laurence Gerard, Public Information Officer for the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) - Office: 221 33-869-8560 - Mobile: 221 77-3324928 - E-mail: [gerardl@un.org](mailto:gerardl@un.org) - <http://unowa.unmissions.org>*