

PRESS RELEASE

Nineteenth high-level meeting of Heads of UN Peace Missions in West Africa

Harmonizing the action of the United Nations to secure peace in West Africa

Dakar, September 29, 2010 - Representatives of the United Nations (UN) peace missions in West Africa held their nineteenth high-level consultation in Dakar in order to coordinate the action of the UN in order to secure stability in the sub-region.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Said Djinnit, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG) for West Africa (UNOWA). Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, SRSG in Liberia (UNMIL), Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, SRSG in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), Mr. Abou Moussa, Deputy SRSG in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and Mr. Nega Berhanemeskel, Chief of the United Nations Integrated Office for Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone (UNIOPSIL) also participated.

Participants exchanged views on recent political developments in the sub-region, including Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Niger and Togo. They welcomed the positive developments in the Ivorian electoral process and encouraged the political actors to maintain the current momentum with a view to holding the Presidential election as planned. They further stressed the importance of collaborating at regional level to maintain stability as well as to support development and prosperity in West Africa.

The Missions chiefs extensively discussed the situation in Guinea. They called upon the political leader and the candidates to overcome the current difficulties and to create the conditions for the holding of a peaceful second round of the Presidential election

Considering election as a factor of instability and threat to social peace and taking into account the heavy electoral calendar in West Africa, the Representatives of UN peace missions have agreed to strengthen cooperation and join efforts for the UN System to fully support all the States concerned in this matter. They reiterated the UN commitment to support free, transparent and peaceful electoral process and strongly encouraged all institutions, candidates, supporters and the populations to avoid electoral violence by all means.

The participants also welcomed the adoption of the Dakar Declaration at the Regional Forum held in Dakar from 15 to 17 September 2010 on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325, on the role of women in restoring and maintaining peace. They pledged to continue to support initiatives for the implementation of this resolution and to

coordinate their advocacy efforts to promote the adoption of action plans by the national governments in the sub-region. They also reiterated their support to the regional action plan developed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Mission leaders have finally discussed the latest developments related the West Africa Coast Initiative (WACI) to combat drug trafficking and organized crime in support to the action plan of the ECOWAS. This project draws on the peace missions in the sub-region to strengthen the capacity of the States concerned: Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Representatives of UN missions have reiterated their support to ECOWAS and its action on the matter. They stressed the need for coordinated approach by the international community as a whole to effectively combat this threat to peace and stability in the sub-region.

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