

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Special Envoy for the Sahel and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa concluded a 2-day joint visit**

**Dakar, 7 October 2013**- The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Sahel, Mr Romano Prodi, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Mr. Said Djinnit, concluded a 2-day joint visit in West Africa today.

During the visit, the Special Envoy for the Sahel, Mr Prodi, met in Nouakchott with the President of Mauritania, Mr Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. He was joined later by Mr. Djinnit who took part in the meeting with Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou of Niger, in Niamey and Mr. Alassane Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire and chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in Abidjan.

Special Envoy Prodi and Special Representative Djinnit discussed various issues pertaining to the overall situation in the sub-region and the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which received the support of several governments, regional and international organizations present at the High Level Meeting on the Sahel chaired by the UN Secretary-General on the margin of the UN General Assembly on 26 September 2013.

"The local ownership of any development strategy and the effective coordination between all actors is vital to bringing durable peace and prosperity to the people who have suffered for many years", said the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Sahel, Mr Romano Prodi.

"As the UN moves into the implementation phase of its Sahel Strategy, our work is guided by the priorities defined by the countries of the Sahel and the regional organizations", Mr. Said Djinnit added while reiterating the support of the UN acting as one for the stability of the sub-region including the Sahel.

The joint visit is the third of its kind and the fifth for Mr. Prodi to the region since he was appointed Special Envoy for the Sahel by the Secretary-General in October 2012.

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