

**PRESS Release**

**The Special Representative for West Africa Said Djinnit confers with**

**the President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of Mali on the situation**

**in the Sahel and West Africa**

**Dakar, 18 February 2014** – Mr. Said Djinnit, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for West Africa, was received in audience in Koulouba - Bamako today by the President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of Mali with whom he exchanged views on the situation in the Sahel and West Africa. The meeting was held in the presence of Mr. Albert Koenders, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Mali.

Mr. Said Djinnit briefed the President on the outcome of the hand-over meeting on Sahel that took place in Dakar on 17 February 2014 and which was attended by Cheick Oumar Diarrah, the Malian Minister of National Reconciliation and the Development of the Northern Regions. He also briefed him on the ongoing efforts made in the implementation of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and in establishing the Technical Secretariat of the Sahel Coordination Platform.

The Coordination Platform was established in Bamako on 5 November 2013 on the occasion of the high level visit to the Sahel led by the Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon. Mali is chairing the Coordination Platform for the initial two year period.

In this regard, the President was informed that a tripartite meeting will be held in Bamako on 21 February involving officials from Mali, the African Union and the United Nations to finalize the terms of reference of the Technical Secretariat that is co-chaired by the United Nations and the African Union.

The President encouraged the United Nations and the African Union to work closely under the Malian chair to ensure the speedy establishment of the Coordination Platform and ensure speedy support to Sahel countries. He also referred to the Nouakchott Summit of Heads of State of the five core Sahel countries where they undertook to enhance their cooperation and coordination in various areas of common interest.

The President of Mali and the Special Representative also exchanged views on the situation in West Africa. In this regard, Mr. Said Djinnit stressed the continued commitment of the United Nations to supporting the efforts of the people and leaders of the region towards consolidating their democratic achievements and sustaining peace and stability.

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