

New York, 14 January 2013 - Statement Attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Mali

The Secretary-General is closely following the situation in Mali. He spoke on Saturday with the President of Côte d'Ivoire and Chair of ECOWAS, Mr. Alassane Ouattara, who briefed him on the upcoming ECOWAS summit planned for 19 January in Abuja and the plans of several of its member states to deploy military forces. The Secretary-General spoke yesterday with the Foreign Minister of France, Mr. Laurent Fabius, who informed him on the ongoing French military operations in support of Mali's urgent request.

The Secretary-General welcomes that bilateral partners are responding, at the request and with the consent of the government of Mali, to its call for assistance to counter the troubling push southward by armed and terrorist groups. Countries with capabilities to assist Mali are now providing assistance. The Secretary-General hopes these actions will help to arrest the latest offensive while efforts continue to fully implement Security Council Resolution 2085 (2012) aimed at the full restoration of Mali's constitutional order and territorial integrity.

These latest events underscore the urgency of implementing all aspects of the resolution, including support to ECOWAS mediation efforts, the development of a consensual roadmap for the transition and provision of support to AFISMA and the Malian defence forces.

Preparations are also continuing for the deployment soon of a UN multidisciplinary team to Bamako to carry forward the UN's support requested by the Malian authorities, including on both the political and security process. Meanwhile, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa, Said Djinnit, continues his consultations in the sub-region as part of efforts to speed up implementation of the Security Council resolution 2085. He met today in Abuja with the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Ambassador Kadre Desiré Ouédraogo. He also met with Foreign Minister Djibrill Bassolé of Burkina Faso and is expected to travel to Bamako in the coming days to engage with the Malian leadership.