

Statement by the President of the Security Council

The Security Council takes note of the report (S/2015/866) of the Secretary-General on the progress toward the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and welcomes the briefing on 25 November 2015 by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General (SESG) for the Sahel, Ms. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie. The Security Council encourages further progress by the United Nations system and its partners toward the implementation of the UNISS, including through support to the Group of 5 for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) in order to assist in addressing the security and political challenges to the stability and development of the Sahel region. The Security Council reaffirms its continued commitment to address all these challenges, which are interrelated with humanitarian and development issues as well as the adverse effects of climate and ecological changes. The Security Council reiterates the importance of national and regional ownership of the UNISS, and commends the growing leadership role assumed by the countries of the region. It welcomes in this regard, the establishment of the G5 Sahel, which aims to enhance ownership of the initiatives focused on addressing the threats to peace, security and development in the Sahel.

The Security Council encourages the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel (OSES) to continue to work closely with the G5 Sahel countries as well as other countries of the region, regional and international actors including the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to tackle the threats to peace, security and development in the Sahel as well as their root causes. The Security Council encourages greater cooperation among all stakeholders including the AU and ECOWAS, calls on them to collaborate with the OSES, and the Secretariat of the G5 Sahel as well as the G5 Sahel countries, and reiterates its call for the rapid and effective implementation of the UNISS.

The Security Council is gravely concerned that Libya remains a safe haven for terrorist groups operating in the Sahel region, and expresses deep concern at the threat posed by the widespread availability of unsecured arms and ammunition and their proliferation, which undermines stability in Libya and the Sahel region, including through transfer to terrorist and violent extremist groups. In this regard, the Security Council calls on the international community to provide support to Libya and its neighbors in the Sahel, including by providing them with the necessary security and capacity building assistance in the struggle against Al-Qaida linked terrorist groups and individuals. The Security Council calls on all Libyan stakeholders to endorse and sign the Political Agreement and work swiftly towards the formation of a Government of National Accord.

The Security Council urges Member States of the Sahel, West Africa and the Maghreb, to coordinate their efforts to prevent the serious threat posed to international and regional security by terrorist groups crossing borders and seeking safe havens in the Sahel region, to enhance cooperation and coordination in order to develop holistic, inclusive and effective strategies to combat in a comprehensive and integrated manner the activities of terrorist groups, and to prevent

the expansion of those groups as well as to limit the proliferation of all arms and transnational organized crime. The Security Council welcomes the efforts of the AU and ECOWAS as well as of Member States of the Sahel to strengthen border security and regional cooperation, including through the G5 Sahel and the Nouakchott process on the enhancement of the security cooperation and the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the Sahel and Sahara region, the most inclusive security cooperation mechanism in the region. It takes note of the establishment by the G5 Sahel countries of a framework to strengthen regional security cooperation as well as to conduct cross-border joint military operations, including with the support of the French Forces.

The Security Council reaffirms that Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law, and international humanitarian law. The Security Council recalls that those responsible for abuses and violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law must be held accountable and brought to justice.

The Security Council calls for funding for humanitarian programmes in the Sahel region which continue to be underfunded, hampering timely responses to humanitarian needs. The Security Council expresses its concern at the scale of the growing humanitarian crisis caused by the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group, which has displaced over 2.5 million people including an estimated 1.4 million children and 200,000 refugees in Cameroon, Chad and Niger. It commends the support provided to the refugees by these Governments, including with the assistance of humanitarian actors and relevant United Nations entities, and calls on the international community to provide its support.

The Security Council commends the AU, ECOWAS and the Lake Chad Basin Commission Member States' as well as Benin's courageous and active contribution to peace and stability in the Sahel region and in particular, pays tribute to the engagement of their soldiers in Mali and in the fight against Boko Haram. The Security Council notes that the creation of the Multinational Joint Task force (MNJTF) has led to steady progress in the fight against Boko Haram. The Security Council reiterates its call upon the international community and donors to support the MNJTF. The Security Council reiterates its call on Member States to contribute generously to the African Union Trust Fund and requests the Secretary-General to continue to advocate strongly with the international community and donors in support of this effort. It calls on the African Union to establish its Trust Fund without further delay.

The Security Council recalls the importance of coordinating the effective implementation of Sahel initiatives and strategies, and commends in this regard Mali for its chairmanship of the Ministerial Coordination Platform over the last two years. It encourages Chad, as the new chair to intensify efforts to improve coordination between partners, including through the regular sharing of information and the strengthening of operational cooperation between partners.

The Security Council calls on the international community and donors to fulfill all their pledges made towards boosting economic growth, eradicating poverty and supporting governance reforms, through projects that would support peace and security efforts in the Sahel region and calls on all relevant entities of the United Nations system to focus on identifying and funding such projects, as a matter of priority, in consultation with the OSES and the Member States of the Sahel including the G5 Sahel Member States and relevant regional organizations.

The Security Council calls upon the Member States of the Sahel region, with the support of the international community, to initiate programmes aimed at creating opportunities that would engage the youth in productive activities to reverse the tide of radicalization and recruitment into terrorist groups. It also calls on the OSES to support as a matter of priority, efforts focused at creating opportunities for youth and women. The Security Council expresses strong support to the States in the region affected by the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking, emphasizes the need to step up coordination of efforts in order to strengthen an effective multidimensional response to these common challenges, and stresses that addressing both smuggling of migrants and human trafficking requires a coordinated, multidimensional approach with States of origin, of transit, and of destination.

The Security Council takes note of the organization of the Sahel Women's Forum in N'Djamena, Chad, on 22 and 23 July 2015 to strengthen the role of women in the Sahel region and encourages the Member States of the region to enhance the active participation of women in decision-making. The Security Council also takes note of the organization in N'Djamena, Chad, on 19 and 20 November 2015, of a G5 Sahel and partners Ministerial meeting and an ordinary Summit of the G5 Sahel respectively.

Recognizing the strong nexus between peace, security, good governance and development, the Security Council encourages regional and international financial organizations to provide a substantial financial assistance package to countries of the region to boost economic growth and reduce poverty. The Security Council welcomes plans by the United Nations to establish a Multi-Partner Trust Fund for the Sahel (S-MPTF), in order to pool contributions including from donor countries and the private sector, to support the region's efforts. The Security Council notes the active resource mobilization efforts of the SESG to continue to engage with potential donor countries and organizations to accelerate the implementation of selected regional projects in consultation with the Member States of the Sahel region including the G5 Sahel Member States and relevant regional organizations.

The Security Council takes note of the adoption of a Declaration of the G5 Sahel countries on the Fight against Radicalization and Violent Extremism in the Sahel. The Security Council requests the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) and its member entities, including the Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate as well as

the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, to support Sahel countries efforts to counter terrorism and address conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism. It calls on the CTITF to explore expanding its I-ACT Initiative to all the countries of the G5-Sahel. The Security Council recalls that the 1540 Committee as its subsidiary body remains committed to supporting States, including the Sahel States, that require assistance in their efforts to comply with the obligations contained in resolution 1540 (2004). The Security Council calls on the United Nations to accelerate action to also support the G5 Sahel in the implementation of the African Union's "Silencing the guns" flagship project, consistent with its presidential statement of 16 December 2014 (S/PRST/2014/27).

The Security Council strongly encourages another high-level visit to the Sahel region as soon as possible by the United Nations Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the President of the World Bank Group, the President of the African Development Bank and the European Union Development Commissioner, to assess the implementation of the vision set out during the November 2013 visit, and to strengthen the focus and commitment of the international community in the region.

The Security Council notes with satisfaction the series of consultations between the United Nations, the G5 Sahel and its Permanent Secretariat, which helped promote convergence between the UNISS and the Priority Investment Programme (PIP) of the G5 Sahel, and led to a roadmap for consolidating cooperation between the two entities. The Security Council calls on the OSES to continue to coordinate with the national focal points appointed by the G5 Sahel, and calls on the United Nations Secretariat to hold at least one meeting per quarter with the Permanent Representatives of the G5 Member States in New York, to share information and follow up on the implementation of the UNISS. The Security Council encourages the SESG to continue to meet with the officials of the G5 Member States to discuss developments in the region, activities of the OSES, and progress toward the implementation of the UNISS as well as the priorities of the G5 Member States.

The Security Council looks forward to considering the recommendations of the Secretary-General's strategic review of the OSES to be conducted in December 2015, and requests the inclusion of recommendations on the location of the OSES, in consultation with the Member States of the Sahel region including the G5 Sahel Member States and regional and international actors, bearing in mind the need to more fully and directly anchor the implementation of the UNISS in the region including the five priority countries, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger as well as to maximize synergies with the relevant entities of the United Nations system.

The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to inform it of the progress toward the implementation of the UNISS through oral briefings as needed, as well as through a report and a briefing no later than 31 October 2016. The Security Council also requests the Secretary-General to include in his report, detailed information on the financial contributions towards

boosting economic growth and eradicating poverty, through projects that would support peace and security efforts in the Sahel region, noted in paragraph 26 of his report of 24 July 2014 (A/69/162-S/2014/542) and recommendations for strengthening Sahel Member States' capabilities to prevent drivers of violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism. The Security Council encourages the SESG to pursue her efforts and good offices in order to enhance regional and interregional cooperation and strengthen coordinated international assistance to the countries of the Sahel region in close coordination with the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for West and Central Africa. In this regard, the Security Council welcomes updates on the overall situation in the Sahel region in the Secretary-General's regular reports on the situations in West and Central Africa.