

Speech: Rapid progress is needed in Mali to implement Peace Agreement.

Thank you Madam President.

Let me begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Mali Mahamat Saleh Annadif and all of his staff for their important work, and also for thanking Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing. We welcome the Secretary-General's report and perhaps through Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, to thank the bravery and pay tribute to the bravery of those working in MINUSMA in a very challenging environment in which their military and civilian personnel operate. And of course we unequivocally condemn all attacks against MINUSMA personnel.

Madam President, I would like to congratulate President Keita on his re-election and to congratulate the Malian people and their institutions for the relatively peaceful elections despite terrorist attempts to disrupt the process. We also commend the support provided by MINUSMA and SRSNG Annadif in bringing all parties together for a peaceful conclusion.

The UK encourages President Keita to redouble efforts to secure a lasting peace and to improve the lives of all Malian people, including those facing increasing insecurity in the central region.

Madam President, I join my colleagues in welcoming the signing of the Comité de suivi de l'Accord this week. The parties who have reconfirmed their commitment to accelerate the implementation of the agreement must now take action and fulfill their commitment to make tangible progress against the 22 March Roadmap. Their credibility is on the line.

Progress must also include the meaningful participation of women in the peace process and we welcome the steps taken by President Keita to ensure the 30 per cent quota that women in elected positions is met, as per Malian law.

Madam President the price of a lack of progress is clear. The humanitarian and security situation continues to deteriorate across Mali, particularly in the central region. 287 civilians have been killed in the last three months, the highest number since MINUSMA deployed. Today 5.2 million people require lifesaving and protection assistance, up from 3.8 million in 2017. So it is more vital than ever that the Malian government and the international community fulfill their humanitarian and security commitments. In that context we welcome the role of the G5 Sahel.

An integrated security plan is needed to address the causes of the humanitarian crisis and civilian casualties. We are concerned about the number of human rights violations in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. All such violations must be thoroughly investigated in order to bring perpetrators of crimes to account, including those that involve the Malian defence and security forces. This is a global priority for the UK. Yesterday

in London we hosted an International Safeguarding Summit as part of our commitment to driving up standards and tackling sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

Returning to MINUSMA, we welcome ongoing efforts to focus its mandate on political and security tasks, and we encourage further progress in this regard as we look towards MINUSMA's six month review in February.

Madam President, the bottom line is that rapid progress is needed by the politicians on the implementation of the agreement. This is the best and only sustainable way to improve the lives of the people of Mali and to improve collective peace and security. Thank you Madam President.