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DECLARATION OF SOLIDARITY OF WEST AFRICAN WOMEN UNITED IN WILDAF-AO¹ WITH THE WOMEN AND GIRLS OF MALI

On 9 January 2022, the Heads of African State meeting in Accra (Republic of Ghana), at the extraordinary summits of WAEMU and ECOWAS, adopted sanctions against Mali, which were made public. These measures were taken by the ECOWAS Heads of State who "deplored the fact that the transitional authorities in Mali have not made any provision for the organisation of the presidential election before the date of 27 February 2022 provided for in the agreement concluded with the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State on 15 September 2020 and contrary to the commitments made in the framework of the Charter of the Transition. The Heads of State also deemed "totally unacceptable" the timetable finally submitted by the transitional authorities, which provides for the holding of the presidential election at the end of December 2026.

In addition to maintaining the sanctions already in place, the ECOWAS Summit decided :

- The recall for consultations by Member States of their Ambassadors accredited to the Republic of Mali;
- The closure of land and air borders between ECOWAS countries and Mali;
- The suspension of all commercial and financial transactions between ECOWAS countries and Mali, with the exception of foodstuffs for mass consumption; pharmaceutical products; medical materials and equipment, including those for the fight against Covid 19, petroleum products and electricity;
- The freezing of the Republic of Mali's assets in the ECOWAS Central Banks ;
- The freezing of the assets of the Malian State and public and parastatal companies in the commercial banks of ECOWAS countries ;
- The suspension of all financial assistance and transactions in favour of Mali by ECOWAS financing institutions, particularly EBID and BOAD.

West African women gathered within the WILDAF-AO network (Women in Law and Development in Africa/Femmes, Droits et Développement- Afrique de l'Ouest) deplore the adoption of these sanctions, which are unanimously rejected. In its statement of 10

¹ [Acting for Women's Rights in Africa](#)

WILDAF-WA: A network of more than 500 member organisations in 15 West African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo (11 national networks), , Sierra Leone, Mauritania, Gambia, Cape Verde (4 Focal Points

January 2022, the Consortium supports the transitional government and states that the sanctions imposed, cause enormous harm to "populations already weakened by the multidimensional crisis that Mali has been experiencing since 2012". As Madame Adam Dicko, President of the Association des Jeunes pour la Citoyenneté Active et la Démocratie (AJCAD), put it so well in front of the UN Security Council on 11 January 2022, "you don't sanction a wounded people »!

Furthermore, it is safe to say that the measures to close borders and suspend trade transactions will hit women hardest, as in West Africa they make up more than 60% of informal cross-border traders (African Centre for Trade, Integration and Development) and 40% of young cross-border small traders (World Bank).

The women of West Africa therefore express their solidarity with the people of Mali, especially women and girls who are feeling the impact of the conflict that Mali has been experiencing for a decade, and who bear the burden of inequalities caused by the bad governance of the leaders.

Recalling the need for ECOWAS to be attentive to the interests of the sovereign peoples who constitute its base and to whom the Heads of State should feel accountable;

Considering the negative impact that the sanctions taken are likely to have on the population and particularly on women and girls.

The women of West Africa call on the Heads of State of ECOWAS and other sub-regional and regional institutions, namely WAEMU and the African Union, to listen to the voice of Malian women and to become aware of the geopolitical issues at stake in Mali, so as not to continue to sacrifice the interests of the Malian people to those pursued by the powerful of this world ;

Like the Malian women, we are in favour of a return to constitutional order as soon as possible ; but we call on WAEMU and ECOWAS to reverse their decisions and to accompany the Malian transitional authorities in the search for lasting solutions to the problems of insecurity in Mali, in order to create the conditions for a return to constitutional order.

Done at Lomé, 17 January 2022



On behalf of WILDAF-AO Network

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