

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTERS OF THE CONFEDERATION OF SAHEL STATES (AES)



The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES) followed, via the press, the public deliberations of the 65th Ordinary Session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held on July 07, 2024 in Abuja.

During this Summit, the African Union (AU) Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, declared that "the withdrawal by three countries is unacceptable to the African Union and we believe in a one ECOWAS".

This value judgement is as surprising as it is unusual coming from a statutory civil servant, whose duties and responsibilities do not confer upon him any right to interfere in the internal affairs of Member States of the African Union.

Consequently, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES) disapprove of and condemn in the strongest terms this attitude, which is contrary to the duty of reserve and the obligation of impartiality incumbent on any official of an intergovernmental organization.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES) recall that, in accordance with the Joint Statement dated January 28, 2024 of the Member States of AES, followed by the national notifications forwarded to the ECOWAS Commission, the withdrawal of Burkina, Mali and Niger from ECOWAS is a sovereign decision and complies with the provisions of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty of July 24, 1993.

The approval of a third party is not part of the responsible dynamic of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES), whose priority is and remains the preservation of the territorial integrity of its member states and the defense of the vital interests of its populations.

As such, any assessment of this sovereign decision constitutes interference in the internal affairs of the member states of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES) and a violation of the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitutive Act of the African Union and international law.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES) request the AU Commission to indicate the decision or act of one of the political bodies of the African Union on which such assertions are based.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES) also regret the variable-geometry value judgements of the Commission, which in 2000 did not deem it useful to deem "unacceptable" the withdrawal of a former member of ECOWAS.

This inappropriate, untimely and counterproductive stance is contrary to the principles, rules and practice of the AU.

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES) recall that Burkina, Mali and Niger have, since the early years of independence, been at the forefront of the struggle for the unity of the Continent, the defense of its dignity and the achievement of genuine African integration

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES) reiterate the readiness of the Confederation to cooperate with the Commission and other bodies of the African Union in strict compliance with the sovereign choices of its Member States and the texts of the continental organization.

Considering the seriousness of the facts and the regrettable precedent that could be set, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES) call on the intergovernmental political bodies of the African Union, namely the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Executive Council and the Peace and Security Council, to ensure that the sovereignty of Member States is scrupulously respected.

Done in Ouagadougou, Bamako and Niamey, on July 11, 2024