

Traore Opening Speech

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[Speech by President Moussa Traore at the opening of the Third Congress of the Democratic Union of the Malian People, UDPM, in Bamako on 28 March 1988—recorded]

[Excerpts] Ladies and gentlemen, congress delegates, honorable guests: On behalf of the party's national executive body, I welcome you to the Third Ordinary Congress of the Democratic Union of the Malian People [UDPM]. Honorable representatives of friendly countries, parties, and organizations, the militants of our party are happy to see you among us. This is a sign of your friendship and solidarity. We repeat our welcome and urge you to accept our sincerest gratitude. [passage omitted]

Ladies and gentlemen, congress delegates: The UDPM constitutive congress took place exactly 9 years ago. Following that historic event, our party established as goals the mobilization of [words indistinct] to strengthen national unity, improve the domestic economic situation [words indistinct], and promote the welfare of the Malian citizen in a society of democracy, fairness, and solidarity; the struggle for the total liberation of the continent; the maintenance of peace in the world; and the strengthening of understanding, friendship, and solidarity among all peoples. [passage omitted]

After the fruitful exchange of views our people have experienced, I suggest that the Third Ordinary Congress focus on the unity of action of all active forces for the moralization of public life and national revival. In conformity with the party's statutes, it is the duty of the secretary general to submit a general report to the congress. I will therefore report to the congress on the activities of the party since the Second Ordinary Congress, and analyze our successes and shortcomings so as to draw lessons for our future actions. [passage omitted]

Ladies and gentlemen, congress delegates: Development is a global process requiring a harmony of views among the members of a group and the pooling of all available resources. The militants of the UDPM have all understood and accepted this. The spirit of solidarity and mutual assistance is a fundamental characteristic of our culture. It helps to bind our society together. The unfortunate events that occurred during the Christmas season of 1985 confirmed the reality of this spirit. It is my duty to comment on these events before you. These events are henceforth part of our history. I am referring to the painful conflict between us and Burkina Faso in December 1985. Of course, we continue to see this painful episode of our relations with a brother and friendly people as buried for good. [applause] It is buried for good because the Malian and Burkinabe peoples can take legitimate and equal pride in the internationally acclaimed political maturity and wisdom that they demonstrated in ending the armed conflict and finding peaceful solution to the border dispute that caused the conflict. [applause] [passage omitted]

Ladies and gentlemen, the Third Ordinary Congress of the UDPM is taking place at a time when the world economy is passing through a crisis characterized by a monetary disorder and slow trade exchanges. This worsening of the world economic crisis is seriously affecting all countries, and in particular the developing countries. The deterioration in trade terms and the continuing fall in the dollar rate have contributed to a sharp decline in the foreign exchange earnings of the developing countries, as well as reducing their ability to ensure the importation of essential commodities and equipment for their development. In the face of such a difficult world economic situation and in the face of a serious drought, socioeconomic life has been affected by serious imbalances that have jeopardized our country's developmental growth. [passage omitted] Debt servicing, characterized by the predominance of state-to-state debts with relatively favorable conditions are, however, a heavy burden on the state budget in view of the lack of resources of the Autonomous Sinking Fund. The fall in the price of cotton, which is Mali's major export, has led to a great reduction in our export earnings, thereby diminishing our reimbursement capabilities [passage omitted]

Ladies and gentlemen, congress delegates: Our country, Mali, is a land of dialogue where various peoples meet; it is a crossroads of civilization. Because of its size, its geographic location, its past, and the dynamism of its people, Mali has always maintained a policy based primarily on fraternal and friendly relations, on the basis of mutually beneficial cooperation. In conformity with the general orientation of the party, Mali attaches great importance to the safeguarding and strengthening of African unity. Our country has contributed to the creation of subregional intergovernmental economic organizations, such as the Liptako-Gourma Authority, the Niger Basin Development Authority, the Senegal River Development Organization, ECOWAS, and the West

African Economic Community. The UDPM has always followed a policy of friendship and has developed our international relations on the basis of its concern to maintain peace and safeguard international security. At the same time, it has always supported the peoples that are fighting for their independence, and has pursued a policy of nonalignment. It has consolidated its friendship with brotherly and friendly parties all over the world. [passage omitted]