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[Speech delivered by General Moussa Traore at the end of the extraordinary session of the Democratic Union of Malian People's National Council held in Bamako on 14 January -- recorded]

[Excerpts] Distinguished delegates, Your Excellencies: Two days ago when I opened the second session of the Democratic Union of Malian People [UDPM] National Council, I stressed that the holding of this session showed the special attention that the party and government accord to the economic problems of our country and shows our deep concern in the face of the size of this problem. The deep reflection and the profound and comprehensive analysis which we have engaged in during these 3 days of discussion have further attested to this interest and this concern. I also stressed that our people are expecting from this meeting lucid, courageous, and bold decisions and measures that will enable us to rapidly realize our fundamental objective: economic and financial recovery. The resolutions that have sanctioned our deliberations, ladies and gentlemen, have responded to the exigencies of the situation because you wished to assume your responsibilities and you have shown realism, clearheadedness, and rigor.

Distinguished delegates, you will allow me at this juncture, in the light of the content of our resolutions, to emphasize a number of points. First, our economy is at a standstill; the serious world crisis has been rightly underlined, but we took care not to hide behind this crisis or to blame it for all our problems and all our ills. We proceeded to make an objective criticism of the policies and programs adopted in the various economic sectors and we were thus able to realize the true situation. This is very important, first and foremost for ourselves, for it allows us to assess clearly our share of responsibility in the crisis, and at the same time to see what we should do to surmount it.

Furthermore, as far as the 5-year plan is concerned, we also discussed its financing. While expressing satisfaction with the positive results of the recent donors conference, we stressed -- and rightly so -- the very special importance of local financing and the absolute need to raise immediately our share of the financing for obvious reasons which we do not need to detail. Despite the present difficulties and despite our many responsibilities and constraints, we should do everything to bring the domestic share of the financing to a level that is compatible with the volume of our requirements, with our capacity and with our dignity by realizing more savings at all levels. Still on the plan, we should also remember the imperative need to observe the guidelines, to take into account the programming of the various departments, and to better coordinate the actions taken at the level of the sections with those taken at the level of the plan.

[Words indistinct] regarding the economic and financial program whose importance does not escape anyone, the efforts undertaken should be pursued in order to ensure its proper implementation. The performance criteria adopted in this program are within the reach of our economy. To obtain all the objectives, we must exercise greater vigilance, rigor, and firmness.

In this general crisis, only national efforts remain basically capable of attenuating the imbalance of our economy. The increase of production and productivity, the improvement of management of public affairs, and recovery of our state sector will be the main areas of our internal efforts. In other words, external aid can be nothing but a help. In general, we must stimulate and organize the great productive force of our people by channeling them towards precise development sectors and objectives that are consonant with its needs. We must also do away with unprofitable and inefficient economic structures, especially at the level of our state sector, and with the excessive obstruction of the public service, of the sources of financial imbalance and stagnation.

Finally, most of all, we will have to effect a change of mentality by making everyone understand that training should not necessarily lead slowly to employment in the public service. What is more, we will have to convince the people through concrete examples that the instruction received at school can probably be put to better use and be better rewarded elsewhere than in the public sector and that individual and collective prosperity depend on the initiative and efforts of each individual. To stimulate, to encourage and to reward creative private initiative while developing public, semipublic and cooperative structures should be our immediate objective.

As the leader of this country, it is clear that I will not tolerate any laxity, no culpable negligence or failure of duty, for what is involved is the credibility of the Malian state and the very future of our country. As for you, ladies and gentlemen, it will be your responsibility to ensure the wide circulation of these resolutions among our militants and to achieve their full acceptance of the contents so that they may constantly guide their initiatives, their efforts and their sacrifices. I have no doubt that the patriotism of the militants and their awareness of the current development problems will guarantee the implementation of our resolutions in national unity and harmony. The permanent preparedness of the militants and leaders of the party is the best guarantee of the success of the struggle which we have embarked on against the extremely unfavorable international situation and against a natural, hostile and trying environment. We must all battle on all fronts with all our strength.

Distinguished delegates, we have all understood and agreed that to remove the natural and historic constraints that impede our forward march towards economic development and social progress, we must exercise greater austerity, more strictness, and greater efficiency in the utilization and management of our natural and human resources. In this connection, we should adopt two guiding principles: We should choose the right man for the right position and render profitable our economic structures through balanced management.

Distinguished delegates, while bidding you farewell and wishing you a safe return to your homes, I declare closed the second extraordinary session of the UDPM National Council. Long live the UDPM. Long live Mali.