

President Traore Gives National Day Address

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[Speech by President Moussa Traore for the 28th anniversary of national independence on 22 September in Bamako—recorded]

[Excerpts] Malians, on 22 September 1960 our country gained its national and international sovereignty. By giving our country the prestigious and historical name of Mali, our people thus expressed their ambition to build a

strong nation based on our rich culture and on our past. Every year, the celebration of the anniversary of this major event in our history gives our people an opportunity to assess the implementation of the projects embarked upon and to reflect on the state of the nation, in order to draw useful lessons for the future.

As we celebrate the 28th anniversary of the proclamation of our country's independence, I want to share with you an analysis of Mali's political and economic situation. In this analysis, I will not only point out the problems that stand in the way of our society's harmonious development, but I will also stress the possible solutions to these problems, the conditions for success, as well as the reasons that make us optimistic that our nation will be able to surmount the present difficulties. I will also touch on the state of our relations with other countries in the world, and in particular with African states. I will reaffirm Mali's constant stand on African problems and the serious issues facing the international community. [passage omitted]

After the festivities marking its 10th anniversary, the National Union of Malian Youths during its 4th extraordinary congress embarked on a revision of its statutes and standing orders. The aim of this step is to increase the participation by youths in the party's struggle for a radical change in our behavior. As for the National Union of Malian Workers, the party is happy with its efforts in assisting young graduates in search of first jobs and in reorientating retrenched workers.

Mali, apart from dealing with the problem of the right man in the right place, the third ordinary congress of the party also examined at length Mali's economic, social, and cultural policies. During the past year, the party and the government have paid great attention to our country's economic situation as well as its social consequences. They have made a frank assessment of the situation and adopted appropriate and rigorous measures to remedy the shortcomings that were noted. The economic revival plan is aimed at stimulating national production, improving the situation of farmers, increasing production in all sectors of activity, and creating more jobs. The policy of consuming domestically produced goods consists in producing what we consume and in consuming what we produce. Food self-sufficiency remains our priority. [passage omitted]

The current economic reform program has placed emphasis on the restructuring of state companies and enterprises. After a deep analysis of the situation, the government decided to maintain only those companies and enterprises that are of strategic importance or have a public service mission to perform. All those projects which, due to their poor performance, have become burdens on the public purse, will be dissolved. Those that remain will have their share of capital open up to the public sector. The companies that will be maintained will be rehabilitated by providing them with necessary working tools and financial restructuring. The joint

management of certain projects—such as the Malian Drug Manufacturing Company, the Malian Textile Company, and the Sounkala and Tamale projects—with our partners—has already yielded satisfactory results. The current restructuring of the Malian Development Bank and the adoption of a new and more favorable trade and investment code, are aimed at giving industrial and commercial activities a sound and encouraging environment. [passage omitted]

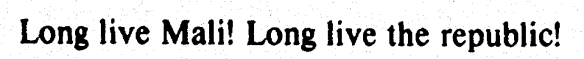
Despite the obstacles in our way, radio and television broadcasting as well as the press are continuing their development efforts in order to achieve a wider coverage of the country. To this end, the rural television project has entered its implementation phase and the extension of television services to Kayes and Sikasso is being studied. Concerning radio broadcasting, radio programs production centers have been rebuilt at Timbuktu and at Gao, in addition to those already in operation at Mopti and at Kayes.

Mali, Mali continues to pursue a policy in the service of development, peace, and concord among all peoples. We cooperate with all countries and international organizations that respect our dignity and our sovereignty. Concerning Africa, we remain convinced that the OAU is an irreplaceable tool for the total liberation of our continent and for its harmonious and integrated development. Therefore, I want to take this happy opportunity to express, once again, our deep gratitude to all the brotherly countries that decided unanimously to place their confidence in Mali by electing us as OAU chairman.

We are aware of the importance and the delicate nature of the mission which Africa entrusted upon us. On this occasion, we want to reaffirm our constant preparedness and our total commitment to pursue and to intensify the common struggle of the African peoples against apartheid, colonial domination, and racist aggression. It is also an opportunity for us to reiterate our firm desire to make sustained efforts, in consultation with all African states, to meet the political, economic, and sociocultural challenges facing our continent.

At the international level, despite some rays of hope, the world still continues to remain under the exorbitant weight of economic crisis. The persistence of hotbeds of tension, the violation of human rights and civic rights, and the unrestrained arms race constantly jeopardize international peace and security. In this connection, Mali, which is deeply committed to the ideals of the United Nations and those of the Nonaligned Movement, supports all steps aimed at achieving world peace and security. I solemnly make an urgent appeal for the peaceful settlement of the various conflicts which, both in Africa and in the rest of the world, continue to tear the peoples apart and to jeopardize their development efforts.

Mali, finally, I want to reaffirm my conviction that, faithful to our traditional respect for honor and dignity, united and cohesive around the ideals of the party, we can meet the challenges currently facing our people.



Long live Mali! Long live the republic!