

MALI

Moussa Traore Opens UDPM Congress

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[Speech by General Moussa Traore, secretary general of the Democratic Union of Malian People, UDPM, at the opening of the second ordinary congress of the UDPM in Bamako on 28 March 1985 — recorded]

[Excerpts] Fellow congressmen and women, honorable guests: On 22 February 1985, our people were shocked by the painful news of the serious air crash at Timbuktu. In memory of the victims, let us observe a minute's silence. [1-minute silence] Fellow congressmen and women, honorable guests, I would like to respect our country's traditions of hospitality by welcoming on behalf of our people and their party, the UDPM, the friendly delegations which have joined in our meeting. We appreciate their presence at the meeting and consider it a sign of deep friendship and sympathy. We assure them all of our sincere desire to consolidate the cooperation ties between us.

Fellow congressmen and women, the first ordinary congress of the UDPM, which was held in Bamako on 23 and 24 February 1982, was, as you are aware, the congress for the clarification of party objectives, and the reactivation of the party. Today, the anniversary of our party, represents a people's holiday in our country, which largely indicates the progress made, and the positive results of an unprecedented mobilization of our people.

The second ordinary congress is taking place today at a time when the world economic environment, and the outbreak of drought in the Sahel, particularly in Mali, are making our people face rough times. I consider that the present meeting will be called the New Deal congress, [applause] that is, that it will constitute a national event full of hope that will help us to surmount our trials.

Fellow congressmen and women, it is now time for me, on behalf of the Central Executive Bureau [BEC], to take stock of the activities of the party since the first ordinary congress, to enable you to evaluate the various efforts that have been made, and to appreciate the impact of the results obtained.

Politically, the party's activities during the period in question can be grouped into five main groups: First, measures were adopted for the reactivation and restructuring of the party. Second, the Bec, remained loyal to the total implementation of all the resolutions passed at the last congress. In this regard, we laid special emphasis on the coordination of the party's activities with those of the National Union of Malian Women and of the National Union of Malian Youth. One must also add that the party continues to include the National Union of Malian Workers in all national debates. Third, we drew up, with the help of interested persons, a dynamic policy aimed at helping Malian nationals abroad. [applause] Fourth, we applied with the same determination, the constant principles of our external policy, a policy marked by the ethics of our people; a policy which is a source of pride for us. Fifth, the BEC, and all the militants,

conceived and implemented a simple and original idea aimed at informing all nations of our most meritorious joint efforts, that is the identification and follow-up of pilot schemes. [applause]

Party leaders at all levels have been maintaining permanent contact with the grassroots. Precise instructions given to the branches of the party by the BEC made it possible, on the whole, to ensure the smooth running of [word indistinct] on the spot, and to apply better the teachings of these contacts. During the past few years, I personally led national delegations to the Fifth, Seventh, Sixth, Fourth, Third, and First Regions. On these occasions, we noted with happiness the excellent improvement in relations between the party and the administration on the one hand, while deploring the inaction within some of the branches and sub-branches, on the other. The BEC took the firm and urgent measures needed to strengthen the party each time. The activation of the party is a permanent action. It requires the active participation of all the people. It is henceforth a living reality within our society. Among the issues that we had to deal with in order to make it succeed, one may cite the principle of representation of all basic sectors of the party at the top level of the party, the strict application of the party's rules for the respect of consensus at elections, and the concrete implementation of the militants' demand for rigor in the choice of leaders. [indistinct slogans heard]

The conciliation of the principles of democratic centralism and agreement among militants is a necessity that we have had to supervise constantly. However, much remains to be done to significantly reduce the time devoted to the settlement of electoral litigations. The party must persevere and ensure that at all branch levels the choice of leaders strictly meets the criteria of political commitment, technical competence, and moral integrity. The party must fight against clans and factions which are formed at election time. [applause] In fact, the principle of consensus is a good one. Together with the practice of consultation with the people by the various party branches, it guarantees the respect of the people's verdict, and alternatives in electoral choice.

Fellow congressmen and women, it is with real pleasure that I announce to you the creation of the party school. [applause] Thus one of the most important points in the resolutions adopted at the first ordinary congress has become a reality owing to the patient work of the BEC. This school will make it possible to give practical, realistic, and efficient education, based primarily on our party, and on our country's institutions. The party school will address itself in particular to the political cadres of the party branches. The first set of students will start classes soon. [applause]

The economy is an indivisible whole. That is why in addition to general economic measures, we have had to revise our grain policy. A series of new measures aimed at reviving agriculture — the basis of any policy of self-sufficiency in food production — have been adopted by the party and government. Therefore, in harmony with our food strategy, adopted 4 months after the first ordinary congress of February 1982, a project for restructuring the grain policy was implemented. Thus producer prices were increased progressively in order to improve payment for the production efforts of the farmers. Consequently, the system of

marketing of grains has become more efficient. The Mali Office of Agricultural Products is henceforth in charge of price control. In addition to these measures, the party and government have also adopted measures for the progressive readaptation of subventions being paid on consumer prices. We will see to it that the commercial margin created and the budgetary resources generated will benefit the farmers themselves in order to continually improve our production machinery.

Fellow congressmen and women, in line with our policies, we are currently implementing the second phase of the Mali-routh policy. This involves the fundamental restructuring of the cotton industry in the well-understood interest of the farmer, the state, and the various organs of intervention. Negotiations are also continuing with our partners in development to draw up and finance a dynamic, coherent, and efficient program for the revival of rice production by the Niger Office. The exploitation of the entire potential of these agro-industrial giants, the hope of our sovereign people in the whole of West Africa, will no doubt require efficient measures to motivate farmers. I can assure you that the party and the government will apply such measures with determination and discernment.

Fellow congressmen and women, turning to the future, I would like to present to you the proposed directives drawn up by the BEC. I will start this time with the economic measures and conclude with useful advice on what the future action of the UDPM should be.

In the economic sphere, we intend to pursue the important task of restructuring. In fact, our policy of revival of the state sector will be expanded in the forthcoming months and will have new and enriched contents, and there will be a program of assistance to the parastatal sector. Negotiations began with the World Bank in 1984. This vast program will be co-financed by other friendly countries. The new 5-year program, drawn up at the joint meeting of the BEC and the government in June 1983, includes, among others, a precise plan of concrete actions. The objective is to improve the macroeconomic, judicial, and institutional environment, as well as the internal performance of state companies and firms. Similarly, a system for the selection of public investments will be designed to ensure that our increasing revenues expected from the current revival will tally with our external debts with regard to our means.

Our present congress must look for an adequate strategy to adopt to face up to major national challenges, and to implement the arduous policies in which our people have laid their hopes. These are the struggle against drought and desert encroachment, the food strategy, the policy of removing the country from its land-locked state, the policy of training and employment, and the problems of youth, especially juvenile delinquency.

Before expanding on these issues, I would like first of all to call on the congress to draw up the 5-year development plan, using the major preoccupations I have just outlined as guidelines.

Fellow congressmen and women, with regard to the drought, a little over a year ago, during the national council meeting, I said: Our economy must henceforth consider drought as a permanent feature, and all our socioeconomic activities must

reflect the desire to preserve the environment and regenerate it. This directive still holds. The importance of the phenomenon has been so great that in 1984 we had to launch an appeal for world solidarity and international aid, an appeal that had to be launched again for the 1984-1985 season. We are fully aware of the problems, and we no longer have any illusions. For more than 15 years, drought has settled in our country, and desert encroachment continues inexorably. In the face of such a serious situation, we must seek new and long-lasting solutions that are more adapted to our new context.

In our opinion, in order to combat drought and desert encroachment, we need to adopt a rational policy of water control. This will in turn determine the success of our fight for self-sufficiency in food production, one of the constant preoccupations of the party and the government. [applause]

The grain deficit in the present farming season, which is evaluated at 480,000 tons, exceeds all our forecasts. The size of the deficit obliges us to succeed in intensifying production and drawing up new strategies for the rural sector. In this regard, in accordance with the party principle to count primarily on our own strength, I have called on the BEC to think about the creation of a national fund for self-sufficiency in food production, designed mainly to promote agricultural production. We must support, primarily, either directly or indirectly, the equipment of the rural areas. The fund will have three functions: first, that of a loan-providing organization with more favorable conditions than the conventional banking institutions. Second, the institution of coupon and credit systems to make it possible to reduce for the farmer the financial burden of bank loans and charges. Third, a guarantee fund that will encourage the other banks to participate more fully in the financing of agricultural production.

In addition to the report that I have the honor of submitting to the congress for study, entitled: A Study on the Creation of a National Fund for Self-Sufficiency in Food Production, there is another proposal that contributions to the fund should be made by the party; that is, some of its funds should go into the fund. [applause] The decisions of the congress on the basic mission, the objectives, the resources, and running of the fund will enable the BEC to adopt its legal framework so that it can become operational during the present agricultural campaign.

Ladies and Gentlemen, after reviewing our economic problems, what can we say about the future political action of the party? First of all, the implementation of the strategies we have designed will require a new attitude, especially on the part of the political and administrative cadres who must agree to make further and greater sacrifices. It is their responsibility to consider what new techniques and technologies to adopt. They are imaginative enough to fashion fresh and appropriate resources suitable to our country's situation. They will be responsible for gearing the negotiations on cooperation agreements toward our developmental needs and for convincing our partners that our projects are feasible. The time-table that they must design for the implementation of these projects should be consistent with our priorities. They will thus increase our country's capability to adjust.

The party must also carry out a policy of interconnecting its sections. Visits to local sections have shown that by opening the sections to one another, we will strengthen their experience and promote better understanding among militants and foster national solidarity. In this connection, I would like to tell you that in response to my Sikasso appeal, several committees, sub-sections, and sections of the Third Region have volunteered to receive immediately the migrant population from the drought affected zones and help them settle. [applause]

Finally, the congress must adopt important resolutions. Some of these resolutions will seek to improve the regulations of the party, especially amending the constitution and the statutes and standing orders of the party, while others will consolidate the positive results achieved through dynamization exercise within the party.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the party is a living institution which undergoes evolution. It is therefore necessary to think over its structure, its organization, and its functioning in order to ensure that they are consistent with the actual evolution of our society. But each of the moves toward adaptation must take into account the objectives of the party and the principle of national consensus. In this connection, in response to the concern of the local sections and on the basis of the analysis made by the BEC, proposals will be submitted to you with the view toward making amendments or adding by-laws to the statutes and standing orders of the party as well as to the constitution. Meanwhile, I invite you to reflect on the various remarks concerning future action.

Before we address ourselves to these questions, I would like to call your attention to a reflection and to make an appeal to you concerning the length of the mandates. In February and March 1984, the National Council adopted a resolution which, if approved, would extend the length of mandates from 3 years to 4 years. Since then, the analyses that have been made and a critical examination of the life of the party show that we must not lose sight of the need to stick to the dynamization of the UDPM. [applause] This dictates caution on our part and careful thought on the need to maintain the status quo or not. [applause]

Concerning the sections, we will strengthen the training of militants and consolidate our action at the level of the working commissions provided for by the statutes. With regard to the party school, concurrently with its functioning and on the basis of the current training cycle, the working group that has been set up will carry on the study to expand the school and upgrade its cycle from the elementary to the higher level.

Ladies and Gentlemen, honorable guests, I take the opportunity of the second UDPM ordinary congress to thank solemnly the countries and international and nongovernmental organizations that have generously given us material, financial, and moral assistance at a time when our people are coping in dignity and solidarity with the great challenges to their development. [applause] We also thank the friendly political parties that are helping us and encouraging us in our effort to consolidate our party.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the UDPM is adjusting itself and gaining strength. We must strengthen it in order to build a national, independent planned economy which the Malian people rightfully aspire to. [applause] It is incumbent upon us to consider carefully and hold consultations in a sound and fruitful atmosphere with the view toward providing ourselves with better structures and mapping out a clear program of action for the government to follow in the years ahead in leading the destiny of our beloved country. The UDPM, as the forum of national consensus, will be the architect of the expected strong and dynamic economy. [applause] It will succeed thanks to the contribution of every militant.

Convinced of the UDPM's sacred mission, namely to build a new solid and prosperous Mali after overcoming all future obstacles, I invite you to work hard during the present congress to make it the New Deal congress by displaying courage and objectivity in your analysis of the nation's vital problems and by adopting pertinent and realistic resolutions. With these words, I declare open the deliberations of the second UDPM ordinary congress.

Thank you. [applause]