Mr. President,

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends of Mali,

I would first and foremost like to thank the Presidents of France and of Mali and that of the European Union for the initiative in organizing such an important meeting and for inviting the African Development Bank.

A week ago most of us were in London to attend the conference on Somalia.

It goes without saying that Mali is not Somalia.
Having said that,

I want to state that I have been struck by certain resemblances with the situation in Mali today.

From one end to the other of the Sahel and Sahara regions we find as many ingredients and the same causes that have led to this crisis and their consequences.

From the eastern Sahel region to the Corn of Africa, from the Atlantic coast through Darfur and the north-eastern parts of Nigeria, we are today facing a veritable threat.

Institutions have been greatly affected by these catastrophes, socio-economic, political and identity problems.

To this should be added illicit trading and trafficking, attacks by heavily armed terrorists, hostage taking and the mass killing of animals.

In short, a serious predicament for security, political and economic stability, not only for these countries and the outlying regions, but also a real threat for Africa.

The African Development Bank is fully aware of the consequences on the region coming from the crisis in Mali.
The huge increase of defense and security spending that has adversely affected the positions and budgetary margins of manoeuver in the neighboring countries.

The humanitarian and social pressure brought by the influx of refugees and displaced persons in Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso, to name just these three countries.

Increased unemployment and a drop in trade exchanges in the Region.

In 2012 for example, exports from Mali to Senegal fell by 80%.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Mali has great potential.

A Peace loving People living in Peace and harmony with its many tribes and kinsmen.

An acquired experience of democratic institutions with the usual drawbacks and hindrances.

Solidarity both at the national and international levels, as we are made to observe this afternoon.

This conference is proof enough that together and hand in hand we can find part of the solutions that Mali and the Sahel
region need to do away once and for all from fragility and instability.

Today, Mali is again facing Security problems.

But we are confident in the outcome of present actions and initiatives.

Now, we urgently need to devote our efforts and energies in establishing the country’s economic resilience and that of the countries in the Sahel.

The African Development Bank has acquired great experience in this area, thanks to the Fragile States Facility set up seven years ago.

I would like at this juncture to thank all the countries present here and who contribute to this Facility through the African Development Fund.

Last week, the Bank approved a special support strategy to the transition period in Mali, and seeking the country’s economic resilience in 2013-2014.

The Bank will provide Mali with the amount of 240 million euros through the African Development Fund and the Fragile States Facility.

This support concerns four areas:
(a) Budget support of 46 million euros, or 30 billion CFAF (half of which by way of a grant).

(b) An exceptional support to economic governance in the amount of 12 million euros, or nearly 8 billion CFAF, for the capacity strengthening of the administration.

(c) Support to the re-establishment of basic social services in a serious state of disrepair, in particular health and education in the country as a whole and especially in northern parts of the country.

(c) Finally, this assistance seeks to reduce domestic debt and thus provide temporary relief to the private sector.

The Bank is actively working on the rapid implementation of the drinking water supply project for Bamako at the cost of 56 million euros, or about 37 billion CFAF.

Today, the execution of this project is our priority because of the pressing needs resulting from massive population movements fleeing the war zone in the northern parts of the country.

I would here like to mention our future interventions in agriculture and food security in the regions of Koulikoro, Sikasso and Ségou to the tune of 35 million euros, or 23 billion CFAF.
Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen,

Providing a response to the Malian crisis, means working for the development of the region as a whole, including and especially its outlet on the Mano River

To do this, we will continue to support the initiatives of the AU, WAEMU, ECOWAS and CILSS, in order to consolidate and enhance infrastructure, and resilience to drought and desertification.

The future construction of the Zantiébougou-Frontier road in Côte d’Ivoire to which the Bank is making a contribution of 56 million euros will help increase trade and economic exchanges between Mali and Côte d’Ivoire.

It is within this framework that I made mention of the importance that the Bank attaches to the completion of the Trans-Saharan highway, linking Algeria with the Sahel countries where the Bank is leading the way.

As soon as the security situation is under control, we will also draw up important reconstruction program for northern Mali including corridors to the northern regions.

Mr. President, Your Excellencies,

For the first time in fifty years the Continent of Africa is making unprecedented progress.
This year alone (if one excluded South Africa because of its economic size and complexity) Sub Sahara African economies will grow at 6.6%.

Of course there are risks, in particular the trends in the global economy.

But the real threats to Africa’s final take off are crisis such as the one in Mali and the Sahel.

It is chronic disorder and mayhem as we see in the Central African Republic, the twenty year old crisis in the Horn of Africa.

The Region of West Africa suffered enormous setback in the 1990s as a result of the vicious war in Liberia, Sierra Leone and the decade long crisis in Côte d’Ivoire.

The Sahelian crisis struck as the Region was beginning the long road to recovery.

We must work together on all the menaces which threaten the progress the Region was beginning to make, from terrorist groups to drug cartels.

The Real challenge for West Africa now, is to create peaceful conditions that assure investors, local and International to create wealth and jobs for our young population.
It is significant that one of the first impacts of the Malian crisis was the cancelation of the 1 billion dollar Markala Sugar Complex, which I believe would have been transformational.

But we have learnt over time that economic growth must be inclusive, inclusive of both genders, of all regions and socio economic groups.

No one, no group, no Region should be left behind.

Socio economic development that is not inclusive and social just cannot be sustained.

As Friends of Mali we are here today to mobilize all the resources we can Marshall for the recovery of Mali and the prosperity of the Region.

Financial resources are however only part of a larger solution, which of course must be in the hands of Malians.

Our task is to support them in doing that.

As we work together with our Malian friends for recovery, and reconstruction.

We all know from experience that supporting fragile states is risky.

Rebuilding a State that has undergone this kind of dislocation takes time.
It requires tenacity; it requires patience, but a clear vision of the final destination.

But these are risks we must be prepared to take and mitigate.

I would like to end by assuring you and the People of Mali of our solidarity and continued support.

Thank you.