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International Monetary Fund  
Washington, D.C. 20431 USA

### **IMF Executive Board Approves US\$18.4 Million Disbursement Under the Rapid Credit Facility for Mali**

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) today approved a disbursement of an amount equivalent to SDR 12 million (about US\$18.4 million) for Mali under the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF) to support the authorities with policy advice and financial support to maintain macroeconomic stability and growth during the next twelve months, as part of a broad-based support by Mali's development partners. The [RCF](#) provides rapid concessional financial assistance with limited conditionality to low-income countries facing an urgent balance of payments need.

The Executive Board also noted the authorities' cancellation of the previous arrangement under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF), which was approved in 2011 for the equivalent of SDR 30 million (then about US\$46.3 million; see [Press Release No. 11/487](#)), which had been designed to cover 2012-14, but was derailed by the March 2012 coup d'état and its aftermath.

In November 2012, an IMF mission reached understandings and referendum on the components of an economic program that could be supported by the Rapid Credit Facility (See [Press Release No. 12/437](#)). The RCF will also pave the way for renewed donor support following the events of early 2012.

Following the Executive Board's discussion, Mr. Min Zhu, Deputy Managing Director and Acting Chair, made the following statement:

“Mali's economy is traversing a particularly difficult period as a result of the 2011 drought, insurgent attacks in the north of the country and political instability in the wake of the military coup in March 2012. Economic activity contracted by 1.5 percent in 2012, inflation was pushed up by escalating food prices, and a balance of payments deficit has emerged. Fiscal stress intensified as a result of weakening tax revenues, the suspension of donor budget support, and upward pressure on social and military spending. The government

responded with fiscal austerity. The tight liquidity situation has led to the accumulation of arrears to external creditors in the amount of 0.5 percent of GDP.

“The authorities’ 2013 program appropriately reflects near-term priorities. It aims to maintain macroeconomic and financial stability by keeping spending in line with available revenues and avoiding the emergence of new arrears.

“Steadfast implementation of tax policy, tax administration, cash flow management, and energy policy reforms will be essential to maintain macroeconomic stability. The ambitious tax revenue targets in 2013 will need to come from an increase in taxes on oil products and progress in tax administration through systematic cross-checking of information by the tax, customs, and procurement administrations. Prudent expenditure execution and tight cash management will be needed to meet the deficit target and avoid the accumulation of arrears. While electricity tariff adjustments are needed to bring the sector back to a sustainable path, a clear reform, a public communication strategy, and targeted measures to protect the poor will be essential to gain the population’s acceptance.

“The disbursement under the Rapid Credit Facility is designed to help Mali deal with urgent balance of payments need and catalyze financial support from Mali’s international partners, which is critical to Mali’s economic recovery.”

## **Statement by Kossi Assimaidou, Executive Director for Mali**

**January 28, 2013**

On behalf of the Malian authorities, I would like to thank the Executive Board, Management and staff for the long-standing support of the Fund to Mali, including during periods of severe difficulties. My Malian authorities view the current episode of adversity as another moment when the Fund can play a critical role in restoring macroeconomic stability and bringing the country back to a path of stronger growth and poverty reduction. Already, the international community has extended its support to Mali in efforts to combat terrorism, restore the country's territorial integrity, and alleviate the suffering of the populations severely affected by the situation in Northern Mali, which has considerable spillover effects to the whole country and potentially large regional implications. In this regard, my Malian authorities are particularly thankful to all countries that are contributing to these efforts in restoring stability.

My Malian authorities are appreciative of the valuable technical and policy advice received from the Fund in the context of the 2012 Article IV consultation and discussions for possible support under the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF). The economic program supported by the current ECF, which was approved in December 2011 started well but was derailed since March 2012 by various shocks which took a heavy toll on the Malian economy. The authorities have decided therefore to end the current ECF program which has lost ground and to request assistance under the RCF. The new arrangement is expected to finance part of the balance-of-payments deficit anticipated for the period 2012-2013, and catalyze budget support from other donors. Despite the challenges, my authorities are committed to implement policies anchored on fiscal policy designed to preserve macroeconomic stability and consolidate key improvements in public financial management.

### **RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS AND PERFORMANCE UNDER THE CURRENT ECF ARRANGEMENT**

#### ***Economic Developments in 2012***

In 2012, the Malian economy was subject to various shocks, notably: (i) the unfavorable agricultural campaign in 2011 and the resulting food crisis which affected an estimated 3.6 million people; (ii) the insecurity and humanitarian crisis in the northern regions of the country following the attacks perpetrated by rebels and terrorist groups. An estimated 420,000 people fled the country to find refuge in neighboring countries; (iii) episodes of political and social unrest since March 2012, which lasted several months before a transitional government of national unity was formed with the priority to win back the occupied regions with the help of the international community, and organize presidential and legislative elections.