Speech of Honourable Demba Traoré, Secretary General of the Radical, Non Violent, Transnational and Trans-party Party, Rapporteur on the discussion of the bill banning FGM, Mali

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High Level Parallel Event

A Worldwide Ban on Female Genital Mutilation: from the Decision of the African Union to a United Nations General Assembly Resolution

New York, 27 February 2012

Excellencies,
Honourables,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

In your great qualities and respective ranks,

You will understand that it is not easy to speak after such VIPs. I will try anyway.

I was invited and I am honoured, to thank all of you most sincerely, on behalf of the Ban FGM Coalition. I am grateful to each of you for your invaluable contributions to this important step in the path towards the worldwide ban of FGM.

You have heard through the speeches given today, what endurance, what commitment, what obstacles have characterised the struggle against FGM. It would be an offense against humanity itself if this struggle were to be forgotten. Indeed, How could peace and justice-loving human being forget our efforts against one of the most widespread and systematic violations of human rights: female genital mutilation?

Some 30 years of international efforts have finally enabled us to reach this transformative and unforgettable point in the struggle against female genital mutilation. Once aware of the dangerous consequences of this practice, what person would be insensitive and unresponsive to the cries of distress of the three million women and girls who are at risk of being subject to this practice every year, without forgetting the 130 to 140 million girls and women who have already been martyred by it?

How to not commend here, with all honours, the Decision of African Heads of States recognizing on one hand female genital mutilations as a flagrant violation of the fundamental rights of women and girls and on another hand, inviting the General Assembly of the United Nations to adopt a Resolution at its 66th Session banning female genital mutilations worldwide.

Mr Babadoudou from Benin,

You have explained to us the procedures needed to adopt the Resolution, we know now very rigorous. We know furthermore that you will apply you spirit and your conscience to with rigour so as to achieve the rapid adoption of this Resolution. Many of us had hoped to return home with the Resolution already in our luggage.
Thanks to your actions, thanks to all the decisions to which the prominent personalities here today have made reference; our bodies become the temple of the Holy Spirit, as written in the Bible. I believe that, it is no longer a question of supporting the United Nations Resolution banning female genital mutilations worldwide – as Mr. Babadoudou said, this is by now a given – but it is time now to go to its application, as the Minister from Ivory Coast emphasised. This will be the way to crown the successes of all these long years of fighting against all the obstacles blocking your paths, which you have overcome at risk of your own lives.

We have referred to religion; we have referred to tradition, therefore together let us now move towards the application of a ban of female genital mutilation worldwide.

May a powerful cry awaken the most reticent ears, and crown our efforts with success.

I wish you all a good session.

Thank you.