

**Statement of the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's (PBC) Country-specific configuration on Central African Republic (CAR)**

28 June 2010

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the Security Council in my capacity of the Peacebuilding Commission's Country-specific configuration on the Central African Republic.

As you know, I undertook a mission to Bangui from 9 to 12 June 2010, during which I met members of the government, the Independent Electoral Commission, the Follow-up Committee of the Inclusive Political Dialogue, the international community, the UN leadership and UN Country Team, representatives of women's organisations, and the humanitarian and development partners. In my intervention I would like to highlight some of the issues related to the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic that I discussed during my visit.

But before all allow me to express my sincere appreciation for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, for her tireless efforts in difficult circumstances. These efforts are a tremendous support for the achievement of the peacebuilding priorities in the Central African Republic.

Mr. President,

Let me first say something about the electoral process. As the Special Representative of the Secretary General has pointed out, the latest postponement of the date for the presidential and parliamentary elections resulted from a consensual agreement among all national stakeholders in the electoral process, all of which are represented in the Independent Electoral Commission. The international community supported this decision, since it provides for the time required to prepare credible elections. During my meeting with the Prime Minister and the President of the Independent Electoral Commission, I stressed that the holding of national elections, including the setting of dates, is a matter of national sovereignty, and that the international community can only play a supporting role by providing technical and financial assistance.

The President of the Independent Electoral Commission informed me of the new proposed electoral calendar. It envisages a first round on 24 October and a second round on 19 December. In order to encourage increased support from the international community for the electoral process, it is important to urgently validate these dates by a presidential decree to signify the government's acceptance of this new calendar. This would facilitate my resource mobilization efforts, already under way, to fill the 7.5 million dollars gap in the electoral budget estimated at 21.6 million dollars. While recognizing the financial efforts made by the Government so far, conditioning the issuance of a presidential decree sanctioning the new electoral calendar on the funding of the elections by the international community would be counterproductive.

Mr. President

Another important item I discussed my visit is the DDR process. The link between the start of DDR activities and the holding of elections could become problematic, as some rebel leaders continue to hope to be able to join a transitional government with elections postponed beyond the constitutional timeframe. It is these calculations that set the background to the continuously delayed start of DDR, combined with the lack of success of the Government's efforts to negotiate with the remaining rebel groups which have not adhered to the peace process. Increased pressure from the Security Council on all parties, especially the recalcitrant armed groups, to finally engage in the DDR process is desirable.

The imminent start of the rainy season is likely to further delay DDR activities in large parts of the country. I advocated for a start of a DDR in those zones where security and weather conditions allow, notably APRD controlled areas in the North-West of the country. This suggestion was received positively by Government and the United Nations alike and will have to be discussed in the DDR Steering Committee. I also discussed the possibility of reinserting a certain number of ex-combatants into the national security forces, notably in associated functions such as rangers or the gendarmerie, but also in the army itself. The Minister in charge of Defence was not opposed to this concept, but indicated that it would have to be done according to applicable selection criteria and quota.

Questions also remain with respect to the reintegration component of the DDR process. The funding provided by the international community through the UNDP Trust Fund covers the costs of disarmament and demobilisation. I proposed to expand a joint European Union/World Bank strategy currently being developed to all other ongoing and planned activities by national and international partners to reinvigorate host communities and communities affected by conflicts. This document obviously goes beyond the reintegration of ex-combatants and covers the wider reintegration efforts. It could serve as a further basis for the government to contribute its own planned and ongoing activities, including those to be funded from CEMAC money.

Mr. President,

During my mission I also discussed the other priorities of the Strategic Framework. I reiterated the willingness of the Central African Republic Configuration of the PBC to organise an event after the successful holding of the elections and the conclusion of the country's DDR process to mobilize resources for other peacebuilding priorities in the country, including for Security Sector Reform. In the short term, I asked the government to identify the most urgent priorities in this field and indicated my willingness to approach some donors for a limited set of specific interventions. It was agreed that the European Union expert on SSR in Bangui will work with the SSR technical Secretariat to reformulate and fine tune the SSR projects with a view to seek funding from international partners for the their implementation.

Similarly to the mapping document on ongoing and planned activities in development of communities affected by conflict, it was agreed with the Minister of Justice that the same would be done for ongoing and planned activities in the area of rule of law and

justice. The purpose of the mapping document is to ensure coordination and coherence of actions in the area of justice and rule of law. It would also allow for the identification of gaps and ensuring that potential new actors in the field insert their actions in a manner to avoid duplication and overlap.

I also met representatives of women's organizations and stressed the importance of the gender perspective in all my contacts. I pleaded for more female representation in the institutions of the country and for representatives of women's organizations to be allowed to participate as observers in the deliberations of the Independent Electoral Committee and the Follow-up Committee of the Inclusive Political Dialogue.

Mr. President,

Allow me a final word on the planned departure of MINURCAT towards the end of the year. I am pleased that Resolution 1923 requests the Secretary General to provide an assessment on international and regional options for the Central African Republic in his July report, as MINURCAT had a stabilizing effect on the north eastern part of the country. Simply leaving this region still prone to internal turmoil and regional spill-over is not an option as the risk of relapse into conflict is real. If the regional option is chosen, a significant numeric and logistical reinforcement of MICOPAX will be necessary, which can only be achieved with an international support package. The Central African Republic can become a successful example for the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, but the importance of peacekeeping should not be forgotten in the short term.

Thank you, Mr. President.