

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal meeting of the Central African Republic Country Configuration
13 November 2013

Chairperson's Summary of the Discussion

Background

1. On 13 November 2013, the Central African Republic (CAR) configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened an informal Ambassadorial-level discussion on the country. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak, Chairperson of the PBC. Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and General Babacar Gaye, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to CAR, participated in the discussion.

2. The objective of the discussion was to exchange views on a possible PBC role in support of ongoing UN efforts aimed at addressing the situation in CAR. Noting that it was not a traditional meeting of a PBC country configuration, the PBC Chair, posed two specific questions to guide the discussion, namely: 1) Where would the PBC fit in the current environment in CAR? and; 2) How could the PBC support the UN efforts on the ground?

Briefing by Mr. Feltman and SRSG Gaye

3. Mr. Feltman, who had participated in the third meeting of the International Contact Group (ICG) on the Central African Republic, in Bangui, on 8 November, underscored the importance of concluding the 18-month transition, with elections taking place by February 2015. The Bangui declaration adopted by the ICG on 8 November provided a number of possible entry points for PBC engagement in the country, including accompaniment of the political transition, the redeployment of local administration and reestablishment of law and order, and good governance and public finance transparency. Members of the ICG agreed that the restoration of public law and order was an essential pre-requisite for the success of the stabilization efforts, to be followed by disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the armed groups and extensive security sector reform. Mr. Feltman was of the view that the PBC could play a role in support of the UN and regional efforts in these three areas. He concluded his intervention by emphasizing the need for the international community to speak with one voice and to work in tandem in support of the people of CAR.

4. SRSG Gaye welcomed the PBC meeting on CAR as part of the efforts to mobilize international attention and support for the country. He pointed to the dire human rights situation in CAR as of particular concern and that free, fair and credible elections in February 2015 was the only way forward. He also highlighted the need for rapid stabilization of the security situation, which was deteriorating even further with intensified inter-communal violence. The SRSG noted that the deployment of an African-led International Support Mission for CAR (MISCA) is crucial in order to

stabilize the situation without delay. He also noted that the PBC could helpfully support the mobilization of support for the deployment and operations of MISCA, in particular for projects aimed at restoring trust and livelihood for the population. The SRSG further emphasized that PBC's support to the upcoming elections, to re-building state institutions and to improving the economic and financial situations in the country was of great importance to send a powerful message of solidarity with the transitional government and the people of CAR.

Discussion by Members of the Configuration

5. Members welcomed the meeting and the briefing provided by Mr. Feltman and SRSG Gaye and agreed that the first order of priority in CAR should be the restoration of security and order. Many members noted, however, that peacebuilding must be considered early enough in designing the international community's approach to addressing the crisis in CAR, and, therefore, the PBC should remain engaged with the country. Members also noted that the PBC's most valuable contribution will be to keep all key actors at the UN and beyond duly mobilized and attentive to the needs of CAR. It was further noted that the Security Council would likely to benefit from the PBC's support in this regard.

6. While agreeing in general with the views of USG Feltman and SRSG Gaye regarding the areas of possible PBC's contribution, some members noted that there is a need for further reflection on the realistic role which the PBC can play in the current situation. In this regard, it was recommended that the PBC needed to exercise its convening role and serve as a platform for strategic problem-solving, identify gaps in the international community's response, promote engagement by and coherence of key partners and mobilize broader international support to national, regional and UN efforts. Two members agreed with the SRSG that re-building legitimate and functioning state institutions is a major priority which the PBC should explore ways of supporting. It was stressed, however, that the PBC should be guided by the needs on the ground and should usefully focus on supporting the role and efforts of the SRSG.

7. Some members noted that the selection of a dedicated chair for the CAR Configuration is important in order to position the PBC to play a more pro-active role. It was also emphasized that the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) should step-up its support to the PBC with expert advice on emerging peacebuilding priorities. One member also noted that the CAR's recent relapse occurred while the country was still on the agenda of the PBC. There is a need to draw lessons and identify the causes of relapse in CAR.

6. Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, noted that it is crucial that the scope of the PBC's engagement in CAR needs to be realistic and carefully measured. The PBC needs to take into consideration the views of the SRSG. She further stated that the Peacebuilding Fund was currently considering a project is support of the police and gendarmerie. While the Peacebuilding Support Office was committed in principle, the details of such financial support would need to be ironed

out focusing on the following four minimum requirements, namely: 1) Thorough vetting of the prospective members of the police and gendarme; 2) Broad-based oversight mechanism; 3) incremental “Tranche-by-tranche” funding, and: 4) coordination with a similar/complementary EU-funded project.

Next steps

7. In conclusion, the Chair summarized the key points raised in the meeting, and stated that, as the Chairperson of the PBC, his first priority was to continue engaging actively with the CAR government with a view to nominating a Chair of the CAR configuration.
