

Peacebuilding Commission
Informal Country-Specific Meeting on Central African Republic

16 February 2011

Chair's Summary Note

1. The purpose of the informal meeting of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission was to hear a briefing from BINUCA on the electoral process, and to engage in a discussion with national authorities on preparations for the country's second generation Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Government was represented by H.E. Mr. Sylvain Maliko, Minister of State for Planning. BINUCA was represented by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of BINUCA, Mrs. Sahle-Work Zewde.
2. In her intervention the **Special Representative of the Secretary-General** briefed members of the PBC on the first round of presidential and legislative elections held on 23 January 2011. She concurred with the assessment of the 50 international and 500 national observers which had been deployed, stating that despite some technical challenges, the elections were held in a calm atmosphere over the whole territory, and in generally acceptable conditions for a post-conflict country. The SRSG noted with appreciation that national authorities had pressed ahead with the holding of the elections, despite the constitutional amendment passed last year which would have allowed them to remain in power *sine die*.
3. Mrs. Zewde further informed that on 1 February, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) announced preliminary results of the Presidential elections, with incumbent President Bozizé leading the poll with 70 percent of the votes. Opposition candidates Patasse, Ziguele, Nakombo and Demafouth each obtained 20 percent, 6 percent, 4.6 percent and 2.6 percent respectively. While the opposition candidates, except Mr. Demafouth, immediately contested the results of the elections on allegations of fraud and irregularities, on 12 February, the Constitutional Court validated the results as follows: 64.37 percent for Bozizé, 21.43v percent for Patasse, 6.8 percent for Ziguele, 4.61 percent for Nakombo and 2.79 percent for Demafouth. After careful consideration, the Constitutional Court dismissed the requests for annulment by some opposition candidates for lack of substantiating evidence. These results were based on the final count of 4,049 polling stations, equivalent to 87.6 percent of the votes. With these results, there would not be a need for a second round of presidential elections.
4. The results of the legislative elections showed that 35 candidates were elected in the first round (26 from the presidential majority, 8 independents and 1 opposition). The *Collectif des Forces du Changement (CFC)*, regrouping most opposition parties, has shortly thereafter announced the withdrawal of all their candidates from the second

round of the elections, which is scheduled to be held on 27 March, to fill the remaining seats in the National Assembly.

5. With respect to DDR, Mrs. Zewde noted that the DDR process was making little to no progress. Efforts have been made and continue to be made to move the process forward in parallel, which included the recent nomination by the President of some of the representatives of rebel groups as advisors to the Minister in charge of DDR, the conclusion of the verification process in the North-West of the country, and the confirmation of APRD readiness to disarm. In the North-East, a joint mission by MICOPAX, the FACA (Forces Armées Centrafricaines) and the Minister in charge of DDR was being deployed to evaluate whether the security conditions were conducive to initiating DDR. Finally, a technical committee of the DDR Steering Committee had endorsed a draft strategy for reintegration, which would now be submitted to the DDR Steering Committee for consideration. The next meeting of the Steering Committee was also due to discuss the freezing of the UNDP DDR management team, in light of the lack of progress in DDR, and the fast approaching rainy season.
6. BINUCA's Security Institutions Unit (SIU) was working on getting SSR back on track, although its work has been hampered by the current focus on the electoral process.
7. **France** welcomed the holding of the elections in an overall secure environment, but regretted that technical challenges had affected the overall quality of the electoral process, in particular the late posting of electoral lists and the faulty compilation of results. France encouraged all parties to continue working together in ensuring the successful holding of the second round of legislative elections. France regretted that the DDR process was at a standstill, noting also that quick progress was needed now, in particular given the considerable financial contribution by CEMAC to the Government for the reintegration component. **Gabon** welcomed the electoral success in CAR, and encouraged all parties to move swiftly to conclude the second round. Gabon stressed the importance of focusing on the implementation of all the recommendations of the Inclusive Political Dialogue. France and Gabon expressed concern with the security situation in the North-East of the country, in particular in the Birao area. Both delegations also congratulated the international community and BINUCA for the support provided to the electoral process.
8. In her response **SRSZ Zewde** noted that the decision to conduct a manual census rather than an electronic one was taken unanimously by the Electoral Steering Committee, the consequences of which needed to be accepted. Where possible, electoral list had been posted 48 hours prior to the voting. The results approved by the Constitutional Court, based on 87 percent of the votes, were within the acceptable range. On reintegration, SRSZ Zewde confirmed that the Government had accepted to pay for much of the strategy, but that more would be needed, some of which could be submitted to donors during the round table. The continuous security vacuum in the North-East reinforced the need to seriously consider the strengthening of the national defence and security forces.

9. In his intervention **Minister Maliko** thanked the international support received for the organisation of the elections in his country, and noted the high voter turnout. He looked forward to reengagement by the opposition, and informed that measures were being taken to rectify the insufficiencies noted in the first round.
10. With respect to the preparation for a the second generation PRS, action had been taken starting in October 2010, including field studies, an assessment of the implementation of the first PRS, the creation of thematic groups, and the organisation of sectoral round tables. The broad orientations of the new PRS, which will be incorporated with peacebuilding priorities, will be:
- (1) the socio-economic context, including indicators of socio economic development; poverty profile (based on studies done throughout territory to measure impact of poverty on populations and assess evolution);
 - (2) peacebuilding, good governance and the rule of law; including security issues, regional issues, political/economic/administrative good governance and rule of law;
 - (3) economic reinvigoration (*relance économique*) through (i) rural development, and natural resources (mining, forestry, tourism, and telecommunication); (ii) energy and opening up of the economy; and (iii) human capital and basic social services including education, health, gender, environment; and
 - (4) growth scenarios and follow-up mechanism.
11. Regarding the dates for a possible donors' round table, Minister Maliko indicated that additional discussions would be needed to identify the best possible time to organise it.
12. The Chairperson of the country-specific configuration, Ambassador Jan Grauls, informed the members of the PBC that a draft document for the second review of the PBC's Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding would be circulated shortly. The Chairperson requested that a similar exercise be conducted in Bangui, with a view to produce jointly shared conclusions and recommendations on the way forward. The Chairperson also indicated his readiness to visit the CAR in the coming weeks, and to organise subsequently a visit of the configuration to the field. Consultations with the Government and BINUCA would be undertaken to ascertain the appropriate timing for both visits.
13. The meeting was adjourned.
