

**High-Level Side Event on Addressing
Peacebuilding and Development Challenges
in the Central African Republic**

20 September 2010

Chair's Summary Note

1. The Peacebuilding Commission and the World Bank jointly organised a high-level event on the peacebuilding and development challenges of the Central African Republic (CAR) on 20 September 2010. The meeting took place on the first day of the 2010 Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and days before the opening of the 65th U.N. General Assembly. The objective of the event was to reach a shared understanding on the critical peacebuilding and development challenges in the CAR, demonstrate high-level international commitment to help accelerate the DDR program and to facilitate free, fair and transparent elections, and to mobilize resources for post-election peace building and development needs, through a prospective donors' conference to be held in 2011.
2. Participants to the event included H.E. Mr. François Bozizé, President of the CAR, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, Mrs. Obiageli Ezekwesili, World Bank Vice-President for the Africa Region, Mr Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank, H.E. Mrs. Sahle-Work Zewde, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in CAR, high-level representatives of current and potential partner countries, representatives of regional and sub-regional organizations and of international financial institutions (European Union, African Union, CEMAC, ECCAS, International Monetary Fund). The session was chaired by H.E. Mr. Jan Grauls, Chairperson of the PBC's CAR Configuration.
3. The completion of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, the holding of free and fair elections in 2011, and the country's security situation in a post-MINURCAT context were at the forefront of the identified peacebuilding preoccupations. There was also broad recognition of the country's challenges in achieving the MDGs by 2015, and of the need to do more for the country's reconstruction and development. The event generated a series of notable commitments by international partners.
4. President Bozizé reiterated his government's commitment to hold the 2011 elections and stressed the importance it attaches to Security Sector Reform (SSR) and national capacity building after MINURCAT's withdrawal. He emphasised the need for increased international support towards the country's development goals.
5. In his opening remarks, the UN Secretary-General noted the considerable challenges the country faced in achieving the MDGs. He commended the Government's decision to request to be added to the PBC's agenda, and encouraged it to continue demonstrating ownership in this context. He pointed out that PBC engagement had attracted additional partners and had led to strengthened cooperation with the WB. He also noted that the Peacebuilding Fund had allocated US\$ 31 million to the CAR since the country was declared eligible in January 2008.

6. The SG stressed the important milestones for the coming months, recalling the challenges faced in the DDR process (including the urgency of developing the reintegration aspect) and the importance that the authorities meet their commitment to hold elections in January 2011. With respect to the imminent withdrawal of MINURCAT from Chad and Northern CAR, the SG recalled that the Security Council had expressed support for the second option presented in his last report, which focuses on medium- to long-term capacity building in the security sector, coupled with immediate support measures with the assistance of bilateral partners and sub-regional and regional organisations, such as the African Union (AU) or the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), in the areas of training and equipment. International donors support would still be needed.
7. In his intervention, President Bozizé recalled the “patriotic jolt” of 2003 that had marked the beginning of a new phase in the country’s history. He first expressed his strong commitment to the holding of free, fair and transparent elections in 2011, and thanked the international community for its support. He noted, however, that the stabilisation of the country and the consolidation of peace would require additional efforts in the security and justice sectors. The security threats caused by rebel groups, including the LRA, are compounded by weak national security and defence forces. In this regard, he reiterated his country’s request, made on 30 July to the Security Council, for a transfer of MINURCAT’s assets to the CAR’s armed forces, as well as for the training of those forces. In the realm of development and reconstruction, CAR has been badly affected by the effects of the global financial crisis, with adverse effects on food supply and in the agricultural sector. President Bozizé said that the situation remained particularly precarious and required international support that could not wait until after next year’s elections. As a result of this, the initial estimate of US\$ 5.5 billion for 2008-2015 for CAR to achieve the MDGs by 2015 had now doubled.
8. The WB Vice-President for the Africa region highlighted that the impressive attendance to the event – during the busy MDG summit – was an important indication of the growing interest and support for the CAR. She pointed out the good progress that the CAR had made since 2005 in consolidating peace and in implementing economic and governance reform. This included the attainment of the HIPC Completion Point in 2009 with the corresponding debt relief. However, she noted that sustained commitment and attention for those processes remained necessary, including with regard to the holding of the 2011 general elections and progress towards achieving the MDGs. The Vice-President for Africa noted that beyond national efforts, maintaining stability and making progress on the MDGs will require significantly more external resources in the medium term. She also noted that the CAR had immense needs regarding reconstruction and development, including in the health, education, agriculture and infrastructure sectors. Finally, the WB expressed its willingness to contribute to the organisation of a donors’ round table in 2011 after the successful holding of elections. In that regard, the WB announced its decision to allocate an additional exceptional IDA support of US\$ 20 million to CAR to accelerate the delivery of a new agriculture project.
9. The EU Commissioner for Development, Mr. Andirs Piebalgs encouraged the CAR authorities to pursue their efforts and respect their commitments towards sustainable peace and national reconciliation, including through the holding of the January 2011

elections. He expressed the EU's concerns about the post-MINURCAT security context in the North-Eastern Vakaga region. In this regard, he encouraged the CAR authorities to request an African peacekeeping mission (AU or ECCAS) and invited relevant organisations to further explore options for setting up such a force. Finally, he invited donors to join the EU in making the "development hubs" program a priority.

10. Statements were subsequently delivered by representatives of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), Belgium, the African Development Bank (AfDB), Egypt, Poland, Turkey, France, L'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Brazil, Australia, Canada, Japan, and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO).
11. The ECCAS Secretary-General insisted on the necessity to have clarity on the consequences on MICOPAX in the post-MINURCAT scenario. He said the 700-men strong peacekeeping presence was mandated until 2013 and may be reinforced after the elections. The African Development Bank said its Fragile States Unit was following the situation in CAR and indicated its willingness to take part in a prospective 2011 donors' roundtable. Egypt insisted on the importance of capacity building, alongside other aspects of the peacebuilding and development agenda. Poland announced a US\$ 20,000 contribution to the electoral process. Turkey pointed to the crucial role of the PBC in helping the CAR authorities, and said it was prepared to explore ways and means to support the CAR.
12. France encouraged other bilateral donors to join current partners in support of the CAR, with a particular focus on education, health, infrastructure and administrative capacity building. France suggested that the MICOPAX could consider taking up MINURCAT's activities in the area around Birao, until the national forces are ready to assume this responsibility. The IMF praised the government's efforts in the area of fiscal and other reform, and stated that CAR's economy was now recovering after a sharp downturn in 2009. Brazil indicated it was in the process of mapping options for cooperation with the CAR, which it hoped could materialise soon. Australia recalled its important role in the African mining sector, and said the achieved and expected improvements in the conditions for investment may lead to new partnerships with the CAR "on a number of levels".
13. In her concluding remarks, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the CAR, Mrs. Sahle-Work Zewde, summarized the key issues raised during the event. In her view, the complexity of the peacebuilding challenges, in particular the holding of elections in 2011 and the completion of the DDR process, compounded by the risk of a security vacuum in the North East represented a compelling reason for the international community to develop timely and stronger partnerships to help the CAR achieve lasting peace and stability. She reassured that BINUCA will pursue in earnest its assistance to the authorities and cooperation with all stakeholders. Not only was the high-level donor participation a very encouraging sign for CAR as an aid orphan but the strong representation of Security Council members was also important given the context of the MINURCAT's imminent withdrawal.
14. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.