

**Report of the mission of the Chairperson of the PBC country-specific configuration
on Central African Republic to Washington, DC**

24 February 2010

The Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) country-specific configuration on the Central African Republic undertook a visit to Washington, DC, on 24 February 2010. During the mission, Ambassador Grauls met with interlocutors from the United States State Department, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

The Chairperson had a meeting with Ms. Esther Brimmer, Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs at the United States Department of State. They discussed the latest developments in the Central African Republic, notably in the areas of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), and the preparation for the upcoming elections, as well as the situation of Human Rights in the country.

The Chairperson briefed Ms. Brimmer on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and on his sensitization efforts to increase international awareness and attention for the Central African Republic, and mobilize resources.

Exchanges at the World Bank focused on the bank's ongoing activities in the Central African Republic. In this context, the WB representatives highlighted their community recovery program in the North West of CAR – an area with the highest concentration of ex-combatants and population, which is not covered by the currently planned development hubs – amounting to US\$ 10 million. US\$8 million come from the WB's regional trust fund, and an additional US\$ 2 million from a Japanese funded trust fund. The program itself will focus on public works and agriculture, but will also include activities related to reconciliation and mediation. It will be implemented directly by NGOs present on the ground (ACTED, COOPI and IRC). The WB expressed its intention to coordinate the program's implementation with all stakeholders in the CAR, but does not want to bring it under the control of the DDR Steering Committee which the World Bank considers "too politicized". It relayed the suggestion of the CAR Minister of Plan that a new framework for coordinating this program be set up. The Chairperson suggested that this framework could be used to coordinate other reintegration efforts conducted by the EU (development hubs), UNDP and others. The WB is in the process of organizing the coordination of the program, and intends to start disbursements around April/May. In addition, the WB was providing US\$ 9.5 million in budgetary support over a 2-year period. The country's second PRSP was being prepared and would be ready to be presented sometime after the summer 2010.

The Chairperson updated World Bank colleagues on the latest information regarding the electoral budget. While some contributions were certain to come through (EC, PBF, FR, UNDP), the amount of the contribution from the Government of CAR was uncertain. Furthermore, possible delays in the electoral calendar could have additional budgetary implications, which could not be assessed at this time. The resulting budgetary gap was therefore unclear. Once known, the Chairperson reiterated his willingness to write to the members of the Peacebuilding Commission requesting additional funds to cover the gap. The Chairperson also indicated his plans to join forces with other parties in organizing a donor's

conference / round table after the elections to focus on other peacebuilding priorities (such as SSR, good governance, ...), to which the WB reacted positively.

At the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Chairperson briefed his interlocutors on the latest developments in the areas of DDR, and elections. The Chairperson inquired about the categorically positive assessment by the IMF of the progress in the Central African Republic. IMF representatives explained that, from their narrow focus on the efforts in fiscal and budgetary discipline, the Government had made substantial progress. The Government had managed to increase tax revenues, improve its treasury (single account), and establish a computerized expenditure system. Overall this Government had acted responsibly not to “spend what they did not have”. The IMF also indicated that the Government had not sufficiently explained and taken credit for the progress and positive developments they had made. The IMF was planning on deploying a mission to CAR in March to conduct a last review of their programs in the country, and finalize a report which would be presented to the IMF board in April. A new 3-year program will be finalized by September, which would coincide with a possible donors’ conference.

Composition of the delegation

1. H.E. Mr. Jan Grauls, Permanent Representative, Chairperson of the country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission on the Central African Republic, Belgium
2. Mr. Filip Vanden Bulcke, Belgium
3. Mr. Dan Schreiber, Belgium
4. Mr. Philip Helminger, Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)