

DRAFT 16Sept2010 15:30

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

**REMARKS TO HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT ON
ADDRESSING PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES
IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
New York, 20 September 2010**

Monsieur le Président,
Madame la Vice-présidente de la Banque mondiale pour la région Afrique,
Excellences,
Mesdames, Messieurs,

C'est pour moi un plaisir de participer à cet évènement parallèle de haut-niveau.

Monsieur le Président, votre participation effective démontre votre engagement à la recherche de solutions durables aux difficultés que connaît votre pays.

The Central African Republic faces considerable challenges in achieving the MDGs, even as it seeks to maintain momentum in its search for lasting peace.

The national authorities cannot meet these challenges alone. Long-term stabilization and sustainable development require renewed commitment from the country's regional and international partners.

I commend the vision of President Bozizé and his Government in asking to be added to the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. I encourage them to continue to embrace the responsibility that comes with this increased international attention.

The Central African Republic became eligible for support from the Peacebuilding Fund in January 2008. Since then, the Fund has contributed more than 31 million dollars to support among other things the Inclusive Political Dialogue in December 2008, the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and the electoral budget.

The Commission's engagement has also encouraged additional partners to come on board. The World Bank and the Peacebuilding Commission are cooperating to ensure their actions are mutually reinforcing in support of CAR's peacebuilding agenda.

The country faces a number of important milestones in the coming months.

The successful completion of the DDR programme and presidential and legislative elections will contribute substantially to fulfilling two of the key recommendations of the Political Dialogue.

In some parts of the country, the North-West in particular, DDR is under way. The completion of the verification process in the North-West is an encouraging sign.

However, in the North and East there are still considerable security and political obstacles.

In particular, the “reintegration” component of the DDR programme needs to be developed fully as soon as possible.

Both demobilized fighters and host communities affected by conflict need incentives and positive prospects for life after disarmament.

On the electoral process, I welcome the decision of the Independent Electoral Commission to set a new electoral calendar, with the first round scheduled for January 2011.

I also welcome the unanimous agreement by the Government and opposition parties to stick to this new calendar.

I am pleased to hear that the gap in the electoral budget has been filled. I urge the international community to continue to support the successful completion of CAR’s electoral process.

The UN integrated peacebuilding mission -- BINUCA -- and the UN Development Programme are providing political and operational assistance, and we stand ready to do more.

Of course, elections are not a goal in themselves; they are simply one essential step on a long road.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Another approaching milestone is the imminent departure of the UN peacekeeping operation, MINURCAT.

We need to carefully assess the potential consequences of this step for security in the northern part of the country. In my July report, I offered the Security Council two options for addressing the security vacuum.

The Council favoured the second, focusing on medium- to long-term strengthening of the State’s capacity for ensuring security and the rule of law, coupled with immediate measures to strengthen the capabilities of the national security forces.

Under this option, bilateral partners and sub-regional and regional organisations such as the Economic Community of Central African States or the African Union would assist with training and equipment. Donor support will be crucial.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In closing, let me take this opportunity to reiterate the determination of the United Nations to support the Government of the Central African Republic in achieving sustained peace, stability and development.

I wish you a productive meeting.

Thank you.