

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO THIRTIETH MINISTERIAL MEETING  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ON SECURITY QUESTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA**

**Kinshasa, 30 April 2010**

*Delivered by Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, Special Representative of the Secretary-General  
and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African  
Republic (BINUCA)*

I convey my warmest greetings to the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. I thank the President, Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for hosting this important meeting.

I welcome the efforts of the Central African sub-region to discuss a range of key security issues. Prolonged periods of instability in several states clearly undermine efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and make the best use of the region's vast natural wealth. It is therefore crucial to reflect on several cross-cutting challenges that have had a negative impact, including the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; the fragility of the security sectors in some countries; cross-border movements of weapons, drugs and armed groups; the displacement of refugees; violence against women; a lack of infrastructure and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

The link between arms trafficking and other illicit activities is increasingly undeniable. Yet Central Africa remains one of the few African sub-regions without a legally binding instrument to combat the phenomenon. This ministerial meeting, devoted entirely to considering the revised text of the draft legal instrument drawn up by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, is thus very timely. It builds on last month's debate in the Security Council, initiated by the Gabonese presidency. And it is among a number of important regional initiatives taking place in advance of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, to be held in June in New York. In that regard I welcome the holding of a regional meeting on the Programme of Action immediately prior to your ministerial meeting.

I am hopeful that the ministerial meeting will adopt the "Central African Convention on the control of small arms and light weapons, their ammunitions and parts and components that can be used for their fabrication, repair and assembly" -- a milestone step that would help to reduce violence and bring undeniable peace and security dividends to your States.

I also encourage you to continue to use the Standing Advisory Committee as a mechanism for building confidence among the States in your subregion and as a forum for exchanging views on all security-related issues, including the role of women in peace and security. The United Nations will continue to assist the Economic Community of Central African States in operationalizing and building the capacities of the Early-Warning Mechanism and the Council for Peace and Security, both of which contribute to stabilization efforts in the subregion.

The cross-border nature of these challenges underscores the need to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach. With that in mind, I have proposed to the Member States that the United Nations establish a political office in Libreville, Gabon, to work with ECCAS and your Member States in your stabilization and security efforts. I count on your continued support in our efforts to make this office a reality.

I attach great importance to our partnership and wish you every success in your deliberations.