

Summary of the informal meeting
Central African Republic Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission
9 December 2015

On 9 December, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) Configuration for the Central African Republic (CAR) held an informal meeting to take stock on the current situation in the CAR, with special emphasis on the electoral process and the end of the political transition. On this occasion, Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous was invited to brief the members of the Configuration.

In the opening remarks, the Chair of the PBC CAR Configuration spoke about the volatile security situation in the country following the violent events in late September 2015. In view of the crucial milestones of the transition in the coming days, he stressed the importance of providing continued political and logistical support to stakeholders on the ground, as well as ensuring the security, especially for the elections. With regard to the electoral process, the Chair stated that all possible outcome scenarios of the electoral process should be envisaged and no efforts should be spared to ensure free, transparent and inclusive polling. Turning to national reconciliation, the Chair welcomed the Pope's recent visit to CAR and his messages of peace and tolerance, which he hopes will become the inspiration for all Central Africans to seek to close the rift between communities. The importance of the fight against impunity was highlighted as a crucial step to consolidate the rule of law. In this regard, the Chair welcomed the work of the Reference Group on the Special Criminal Court which supports the creation of the CAR Special Criminal Court and which is currently focused on the modalities for the deployment of international judges. In this connection, the need for reliable funding for this and for the elections was underscored. The Chair noted that the active involvement by the regional partners would remain crucial for the foreseeable future to find a way out of the crisis. The efforts by ECCAS were highlighted as helpful support, as exemplified by the recent Extraordinary Summit held in Libreville, Gabon.

Mr. Ladsous briefed on issues related to the electoral process and the post-transition phase. He started by welcoming the unanimous decision by ECCAS and the International Mediator to extend the transition in CAR until March 2016, however he stressed the need to stick to the set timeline to ensure the credibility of the process. He underscored the historically high level of voters' registration throughout the country, despite the difficult conditions and insecurity in the past months, while acknowledging difficulties which have hampered the registration of refugees. Mr. Ladsous also underscored that while recent pledges had been made toward the electoral budget, time is of the essence for the disbursements to materialize and thus avoid a negative impact on electoral operations. In terms of challenges in the wake of the elections in CAR, Mr. Ladsous expressed concern about the spoilers exacerbating the insecurity and condemned recent attacks against MINUSCA forces. MINUSCA has since adopted new measures in order to be more effective in protecting civilians. Mr. Ladsous stressed the need to discourage spoilers from disrupting the political process and underscored the importance of maintaining a common front with regard to supporting the decision of the Constitutional Court regarding the ineligibility of certain candidates. Beyond the post-election period, the Under Secretary-General urged all stakeholders to be ready to support efforts to address the

root causes of violence and conflict through reforming the security sector (SSR), disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating (DDR) combatants as well as tackling impunity through the Special Criminal Court. In closing, Mr. Ladsous spoke about the piloting of a political ‘compact’ in CAR in the post transition period. The compact is aimed at strengthening the host country’s consent around a set of political, security and peacebuilding goals, for which the PBC active role will be vital.

During his intervention, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding, Mr Oscar Fernandez-Taranco stressed the importance and urgency of strengthening conflict resolution mechanisms in support of the elected new authorities. He highlighted the projects currently supported by the Peacebuilding Fund in the areas of election security, violence reduction and the extension of the State authority. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco also noted that transparency and inclusivity in a safe environment are vital for the elections and the country’s stability. The Assistant Secretary-General recommended that the international partners consider holding consultations with civil society actors and experts from think tanks that can provide valuable recommendations and insight on the dynamics on the ground. Furthermore, the importance of ensuring a coherent approach with regional actors was stressed as the new authorities would surely be tested soon after their inauguration.

Before opening the floor for comments and questions by Member States, the Permanent Representative of the CAR expressed appreciation for the support of all the different department and Member State bodies in the UN system, as well as the valuable cooperation of regional actors, such as ECCAS. Various delegations echoed the concern over the increased instability and level of violence while stressing the need to create an environment conducive to peaceful elections. Many participants acknowledged that the country is at a critical crossroad and more efforts should be directed at the successful end of the transition. In this sense, several participants called for support to the new authorities. Some delegations stated that DDR and SSR measures as well as the fight against impunity must remain high on the agenda, and underscored the need for the proper implementation of such initiatives while ensuring national ownership of the processes. Delegations stressed the need for further resource mobilization and welcomed the role of the PBC and the PBF in this regard. Some delegations underscored the toll on the population due to the humanitarian crisis caused by the prolonged crisis, in the CAR as in the region. Many noted the urgency to ensure the provision of further technical, political and financial assistance to attenuate the needs of the new authorities. With regard to the development of a compact, as suggested by DPKO, some delegations stressed the importance of good coordination.

In response to comments by Member States, Mr. Fernandez-Taranco elaborated on the internal coordination mechanisms within the UN system, but also with actors such as the World Bank, the EU and regional organizations, whereby emphasis is placed on rapid and coherent support to the national authorities.

In his conclusions, the Chair reiterated the PBC’s support to a successful end of the political transition, and vowed to remain engaged in efforts to consolidate stability and reconciliation in the CAR. The Chair highlighted the importance of the international partners ‘commitment to remain engaged and stressed the role that all religious leaders can have in the process of

national reconciliation to foster an inclusive dialogue across the country. He also announced his next visit to CAR, proposing two options: either between the two rounds of elections or as soon as the new authorities are in place.
