

TO: Members of the Peacebuilding Commission Central African Republic (CAR) Configuration

## **Informal meeting of the CAR Configuration 18 April 2016**

### **Chair's Summary**

1. On 18 April 2016, the Central African Republic Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) convened an informal meeting inviting Mr. Herve Ladsous, the Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and Mr. Alexandre Marc, Chief Specialist on Fragility, Conflict and Violence at the World Bank (WB) to brief the Configuration on their respective recent visits to CAR, and provide a sense of the opportunities and challenges ahead in the post-transition era. The PBC's meeting took place a few days after a briefing to the Security Council where the Chair spoke of the PBC's intended future engagement in supporting peacebuilding in the Central African Republic.
2. The Chair opened the discussion by drawing attention to the electoral process in CAR, whereby its outcome has been widely praised as being legitimate, transparent and credible. The Chair welcomed the swift formation of an inclusive Government by President Touadera, in which all 16 prefectures of the country are represented. Despite overall improvements of the security situation in the wake of the Presidential elections, the Chair cautioned that serious remaining political challenges and socio-economic vulnerabilities could derail the positive momentum, and hence the sustained support from international partners to the new authorities is required. In this regard, the Chair lamented that due persistent incidents of violence, a Moroccan Peacekeeper had been killed in a military operation the day before in the city of Rafai, in the East of the country.
3. Turning to the PBC's future engagement, the Chair stressed the importance of supporting the national authorities' ability to exert a strong national leadership role, while on the other hand, the international community must remain engaged and closely coordinated to leverage effectively collective efforts and support the Government's political priorities. In this regard, the Chair recommended that the PBC should play a role in promoting coherent and coordinated action to maximize stakeholders' collective efforts. The Chair announced his intention to visit CAR as well as capitals and headquarters of international and regional stakeholders in the coming weeks, with the intention of forging the PBC's engagement with the elected Government and key partners.

4. Mr. Herve Ladsous reported on his recent visit to the Central African Republic where he attended President Touadera's inauguration and met with a host of national and international stakeholders. He hailed the elections in CAR and pointed out that positive lessons could be drawn from the Central African electoral process and the acceptance of its outcome. Mr. Ladsous warned, however, that serious obstacles lie ahead, while the list of priorities that the Government must tackle is extensive, chief among them; securing the country's stability through the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation (DDRR) of armed groups, the reform of the security sector (SSR), and extension of the State's authority to the entire territory to ensure the delivery of peace dividends such as social services. Equally important, Mr. Ladsous called for support of Member States to the Special Criminal Court, which will constitute an important measure to combat impunity.
5. President Touadera's first 100 days in office will be crucial in terms of creating the necessary credibility and cooperation among national and international stakeholders. In this connection, the Under Secretary-General mentioned his conversation with President Touadera regarding the adoption of a political compact between the national Government, the United Nations and the wider international community for the next two to three years. President Touadera on the principle of establishing a partnership based on a framework of mutual commitment and responsibility to improve the country's governance. Mr. Ladsous stressed the importance of the PBC's and PBF's role in this regard. With regard to upcoming milestones during the coming month, he informed there will be a strategic review of MINUSCA's mandate, which in turn will enable the Secretary-General to make recommendations to the Security Council on how to adapt the Mission's mandate to support the Government's priorities. Furthermore, Mr. Ladsous mentioned that the European Union intends to convene a donor meeting on CAR in mid-October.
6. Following DPKO's briefing, a presentation by the WB focused on the outcome and recommendations of a recent mission to CAR by the Office of Fragility, Conflict & Violence. The country assessment, undertaken together with the UN, UK Department for International Development and the French Cooperation Agency, aimed at identifying key fragility, conflict and violence drivers, as well as resilience factors, main risks and challenges to peace, stability and development. This joint exercise was conducted within the larger UN-WB collaboration framework, aimed at improving support to sustaining peace in CAR, and serves as a mechanism to develop a common analysis and understanding between the involved institutions and agencies about the main risks of fragility. The WB explained that the fragility assessment conducted in CAR is part of a requirement for the disbursement of USD 120 Million in the next three years from the 'Turnaround Facility', a mechanism created to support countries coming out of crisis situations.

7. Commenting upon the presentations of the speakers, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Mr. Fernandez-Taranco focused his comments on the need to capitalize quickly upon the window of opportunity afforded by the positive drive of the elections and the end of the political transition. CAR's return to constitutional order requires special and sustained attention, in particular Member States' political and diplomatic backing. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco highlighted the convergence between priorities expressed by President Touadera and those identified consistently by the international community, namely the need to build stability and ensure security, foster national reconciliation, the return of displaced populations and promote economic development. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco reaffirmed that CAR will remain one of PBSO's priority countries, for which the PBF's contribution will continue to strengthen peacebuilding coherence between the UN, WB and other key partners.
  
8. Member States expressed solidarity with the Kingdom of Morocco and extended condolences for the loss of a Moroccan peacekeeper in CAR. Member States welcomed the insightful briefings from the guest speakers and commended the efforts made by the UN and the WB, among others, to keep alive the interest of the international community in cooperating with the new CAR authorities. Member States focused their interventions on the need to learn from past errors to avoid pitfalls from previous initiatives to help CAR recover from conflict. It was widely agreed that the PBC is uniquely placed to maintain the consensus among the international community to support CAR' peacebuilding schemes through effective coordination, resource mobilization and ownership of the national development strategy and reconciliation.
  
9. While multiple and complex challenges remain in CAR, Member States agreed on the need to focus on maximizing synergies between the peacekeeping and peacebuilding approach, such as the follow-up to the Bangui Forum agreements, to secure short term accomplishments in line with a long term strategies. Moreover, Member States supported to shoring-up initiatives like strengthening the national justice system to tackle impunity, including some arguing to accelerate the set-up of the Special Criminal Court, the adoption of a multi-year political compact centered on national governance priorities, for which members expressed their interest in being involved trough the PBC, and the holding of a donor conference by the end of this year. Some concern was voiced with regard to the need to address issues of security, by maintaining the required peacekeeping forces capacity on one hand, while on the other, focus attention on reforming the security sector.

10. According to several Member States, it is in the interest of regional neighbors to make sure that CAR emerges this time around from recurrent cycles of violence and protracted crises. For this to happen, cohesion within the region must prevail to establish the bases of a solid partnership with the Government of CAR. The Permanent Representative of CAR thanked Member States for their support to the people of CAR and their authorities; the return to constitutional order is as much a result from the determination of the Central Africans as from the solidarity and generosity of the international community. Peace consolidation in CAR will require multi-layered efforts and sustained financial contributions. But this will only be achieved if a modicum of security underpins wider efforts of reconciliation.
11. In closing the Chair welcomed the useful contributions by Member States and highlighted the emerging points of convergence from the discussion. These include the following: The Government of President Touadera will face the daunting task of beginning his mandate with a depleted national treasury and an economy in tatters. The government must secure early wins in key areas of economic development, extension of State authority, DDDR and SSR while securing donors' confidence and continued engagement by enacting fiscal governance measures, financial transparency and efficiency. The Government will also have to redefine the political dynamics with the countries of the region to secure their support for long term stability. International partners should be ready to mark the post transition period by keeping CAR high on the agenda of the Security Council, with the support of partners such as the PBC. Political and financial support will be required for a political framework of engagement, to kick start the implementation of immediate priorities while ensuring that these are coherent and consistent with recommendations from the Bangui Forum and the national priorities. For the PBC, this would be particularly vital with regard to national reconciliation efforts requiring a long term commitment.

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