

Mission report
CSM Chair's Mission to Central African Republic
(27-28 August 2009)

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Chair's mission was to continue the dialogue with the CAR government and the local representatives of the international community on their engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission, in particular the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peace Building in the CAR. Specifically the Chair followed up on four key issues:

- DDR
- Preparations for 2010 elections
- SSR
- Progress in the design of the Development Hubs

2. Meetings

The Chair held meetings with the following:

- Government officials: Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Planning
- United Nations system: the SRSG, the UNCT, and separate discussions with UNDP on the DDR program
- Other partners: the European Commission, the COPESPOD (group of development partners)

3. Actual results

DDR:

The Chair reminded the Minister of Planning and the Prime Minister that the CEMAC funds would be exclusively used for the DDR program, as agreed with President Bozizé during the previous mission and confirmed by the President to USG Pascoe. Unfortunately, no assurances were given that funds would be made available in a manner allowing for a transparent budget calculation in the DDR Program Document. The government interlocutors repeated that the CEMAC funds will not be channeled through the UNDP trust fund and will be made available by the President on ad hoc basis. The way in which this was done for the recently launched "sensitization campaign", announced unilaterally by the government in the Steering Committee without prior consultation with the donor community, does not respect the spirit of consensus required to successfully carry out the DDR program.

Subsequent discussions with the SRSG and the UNDP went over practical modalities for establishing a parallel funding mechanism to propose to the government. The Chair agreed with the SRSG and UNDP that the DDR Program Document should be finalized and approved as soon as possible, with October 1 as a target date.

The issue of the Military Observers (Milobs) of the CEEAC for the verification of the list of combatants was also discussed at length. The CEEAC has indicated it will need 45 days to deploy the Milobs to Bangui. Upon arrival, they will have to be trained and deployed throughout the country. In order to save time, the Chair asked the government, the SRSG, the EC and France to approach the CEEAC and MICOPAX, the CEEAC peacekeeping force already present in the CAR, to check whether MICOPAX could carry out the verification of the lists in order to save time. The budget of the Milobs amounts to approximately 1.3 million USD and is not covered by the global DDR budget estimate of 23 million USD.

Preparation for 2010 elections:

A Presidential decree establishing the national electoral commission (“Commission Electorale Mixte Indépendante” or CEMI) was issued during the visit. The Chair advocated for the earliest possible appointment of the members of that body. This would allow the international community (through the UN) to get involved as requested by the government and hence to allow for timely international support to the electoral process. The Chair received assurances from the Prime Minister that this issue will be addressed soon.

The mission was informed that the draft national budget for 2010 has a provisional allotment of about \$ 2 million for the elections. The EC has already allocated 4 million EUR for the preparation of the elections. However, at this stage it is not clear who will lead the the international community assistance efforts for the electoral process. In 2005, this task fell on UNDP, in charge of managing a basket fund of international contributions.

SSR:

The mission was apprised of the latest developments in SSR, including the ongoing process of calculating the cost of the program, and the preparation for a Donors’ Round Table at the end of October. Several delays have been incurred with regard to the chronogram drawn up during the National SSR Seminar of April 2008. The EC SSR Expert, Colonel de Fabribeckers, was in Bangui at the same time as the Chair and will soon issue a report on the state of play.

The draft national budget has a provisional allotment of about \$ 200,000 for SSR. The EC is planning to appoint an expert to come up with a blueprint of the required budget for SSR in the CAR.

The idea of making an evaluation of the SSR process was accepted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Development Hubs:

Ten “monographies” for the first phase of the program have been completed by UN-Habitat, and validated locally. A national validation meeting will take place at the end of September with all stakeholders and external partners. Three major priority areas have emerged (i) basic social services, (ii) financial poverty, and (iii) rehabilitation of basic infrastructure. Estimated budget is 75 billion CFAF (roughly \$ 167 million). A donors’ meeting will follow the national validation, in order to raise additional funding to complement the EC envelope of 40 million EUR.

The Chair asked the Prime Minister to urgently appoint a technical steering committee in charge of the project in order to ensure the national ownership of the Development Hubs.

Multiplication of sector-specific Round Tables:

The Chair asked the Prime Minister to consider organizing one multi-sector Round Table regarding the revision of the PRSP instead of moving forward with the several planned sector-specific Round Tables to avoid confusion and enhance coordination. The Prime Minister took note of this suggestion, but the government has not communicated about this issue since the mission.

4. Follow up

- Follow up the finalization of the DDR Program Document (target date October 1).
- Approach partners regarding a possible contribution to the budget of the Milobs and speed up their deployment.
- Advocate for participation in the SSR Donors’ Round Table, to be held in Bangui late October.
- Coordinate with the EC on the ground and the national SSR Steering Committee, and take into account new developments in SSR and the development hubs, in developing the proposal for the second allocation of PBF
- Prepare the bi-annual review SF and coordinate this review with the various round tables taking place in the same period, and the review of the PRSP.
- Follow up the finalization of the regional “monographic studies”, and donors’ meeting and support CSM Chair in elaborating and implementing a resource mobilization strategy for the development hubs